

Christ is risen - So What?

"I am the first and the last, and
for the living one: I became dead, and look,
I am living for ages of ages". Rev. 1:17,18.

Human beings certainly live by hope. That much Ernst Bloch showed us. All of us believe that the present will change and the future will bring us something different. Our feeling, premonition, unexpressed thought about the future, may be a mixture of anxiety and hope; but the hope is there. Otherwise, why should one go on living?

Every human being believes that something can be bettered: perhaps one's salary, one's house, having children, having more wisdom, more health, more power, even more love. In fact every human being lives by some hope, however inchoate and inarticulate that hope may be.

But is one's hope to be confined to one's life span? Well, if one hopes, only for oneself, the object of hope has to be either before one's own death, or in an existence beyond death.

The tendency today in Christian theology is to go beyond the personal in hope. When one extends one's hope beyond one's own personal existence, and includes either the whole of humanity or at least the poor and the oppressed in that hope, than one's own death becomes less decisive in the nature of that hope.

Probably that was the kind of hope that early peoples of Israel entertained. As to oneself, the soul may survive the early Israelite thought, in some ghostly but personal manner, in a shadowy underworld; the larger hope was usually pinned to posterity, to the whole people, not to oneself.

The kind of hope in personal and bodily resurrection that the Pharisees began teaching in the times of the wars of the Maccabees when so many young men were so brutally massacred, and great heroic mass death like Bessada occurred brought back

personal hope into the centre, and Jesus' teachings affirmed the personal element in hope by stressing and affirming the bodily resurrection.

But Jesus (in the fourth Gospel) spoke of this zoe a'union as his personal gift to humanity: "I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:39,40,44), and ~~as~~ something to be experienced in union with the risen Christ. He linked it also to "eating my flesh and drinking my blood" (John 6: 53,55,56) as well as to Christ abiding in one and one abiding in Christ (John 6:56; 15:4ff). This is more than an individual hope. It is hope for the Body of Christ.

The Christian hope in the Resurrection, in our time, surings again to the collective and historical aspect, and in the west, the personal and eschatological aspects recede in consciousness. Rudolf Bultmann led the way and liberation theologies consummated what Bultmann began.

1. The Bultmanning Argument and Liberation Theologies.

Bultmann argued in his famous but now-a-days less read essay on New Testament and Mythology¹, that modern man, in order to appropriate the gospel today, has to shed the mythological elements in it. The original kerygma of the Apostles is structured by its mythical world view. Bultmann singled out four elements of this world view which a modern person has to reject in good conscience:

- a) a three-stored universe;
- b) the intervention of natural and supernatural powers in human existence and life;
- c) dominion of evil spirits and Satan over human life and over nature;
- d) the imminent end of the present age, and the ushering in of a new age.

The resurrection message, being clothed in this kind of a framework, cannot be appropriated by modern persons, except

1. Eng.Tr. in Hand Werner Bartsch (ed) Kerygma and Myth - A Theological Debate, Harper Torchbooks, 1961, (SPCK, 1953), p.1ff.

in an existential sense according to Bultmann fundamental difference in always between life apart from faith and life in faith, the distinction itself graspable only by faith. Only life in faith is authentic, a life based on the reality of the Spirit and on forgiveness; this is "eschatological existence".

Bultmann, a Lutheran Pastor rooted in the "Justification by Faith" tradition, and exposed to the Heideggerian quest for "authentic being", stressed however the personal and eschatological (in an existential way) aspect of the Resurrection, and not its collective or historical aspect, as something to be experienced by human beings as such and not just by Christians. That of course is middle class theology.

In Liberation theologies the pendulum swings the other way. The emphasis falls on liberation of whole communities from oppressive structures. Liberation theology is more a programme of action than just a way of thought. It is a programme for "God's underground" to be in genuine solidarity with exploited social classes and to struggle with them for their liberation.

Feminist theology goes one step further. Theology itself needs to be liberated "from a patriarchal perspective of male dominance". It is a project, as Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza would put it, to rewrite the Christian tradition itself, "in such a way that it becomes not only his-story but as well her-story recorded and analyzed from a feminist point of view".² Here half of humanity is to experience the Resurrection of liberation from male dominance.

2. See her "Feminist Theory as a Critical Theology of Liberation" in Theological Studies Vol.36 (1975) No:4 reprinted in Gerald H. Anderson & Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., (eds) Mission Trends No:4: Liberation Theologies in North America and Europe, Paulist Press, & Eerdmans, 1979, pp.189ff.

It is to be a collective and historical Resurrection in which female persons participate, leading to be a kind of secondary resurrection for male persons also as they cease to be dominators and oppressors.

As the pendulum has swung away from the Bultmannian personal existential, "authentic", eschatological faith, to liberation of corporate communities from patterns and structures of oppression, the old question about the nature of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as an event recedes to the margin. Liberation theologies do not care two hoots about whether the Resurrection of Jesus, as an event was historisch or geschichtlich. But if I were to argue here that the distinction itself does not illuminate the problem, it would probably be mis-understood by many theologians, for I am not with the new trend to worry only about what we see and know and experience. Questions about the nature of the resurrection seem remote and unrelated to burning current questions. But to me, they only seem so. The distinction to be made is not between historisch and geschichtlich, but really much simpler: Did it really happen? Or was it only a hallucination of faith?

The Question of Myth and the Resurrection.

Dan Cupitt's book and the recent controversy about David Jenkin's consecration as bishop of Durham, have raised the question of myth once again. To say the least, it is obvious that the question is still relevant. It is a question which raises the most fierce upsurges of emotion. The present writer is no modern man. He has been through a number of European and American institutions but has not developed the capacity to pick up rationalism and secularism as the basic structure of his understanding of reality. He remains unrepentantly trans-national and trans-secular and regards the rational and the secular as two aspects of our perception which do not yield much ultimate meaning. I need rationality to grasp, but the secular framework which preoccupies itself with this world and no other, seems to me narrow, arrogant, and based on

So do not take my response to Bultmann as characteristic of modern man. But I believe Bultmann was basically ~~ignorant~~ ignorant about the Christian tradition. He did not know, great scholar of modern European thought and of the New Testament background as he was that the Christian fathers of the East had rejected a three-storey universe and a static understanding of time and the eschaton. I have documented some of this in my Cosmic Man - The Divine Presence.³ The creation, at least for the Cappadocian Fathers, is a dynamic entity which our rational minds cannot adequately conceptualise. It is, from our perspective, a constantly changing entity, whose main divisions are not three storeys - heaven, earth and hell, but rather the visible and the invisible; the universe open to our senses is only one perceived dimension of this dynamic reality. Heaven is that aspect of created reality which is beyond the horizon of our sense perception integrally related to what is this side of the horizon and giving meaning to it.

Precisely for that reason the Christian does not discount the idea that powers (created) beyond the horizon of our senses, affect human existence and history. The Eastern fathers do not speak of "natural" and "super-natural", powers but only of created beings, good as well as evil, which interact with human beings in the shaping of history and human existence.

The demonic, which some modern thinkers so categorically reject, is an aspect of our present existence. It impinges not only on our personal or individual lives, but also on the corporate existence of societies and the structures which dominate them. So do the powers of the kingdom counteracting the demonic forces.

3. Sophia Publications, New Delhi and Kottayam, 1980 pp.

"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood (human beings), but against ruling authorities (archas) against power-wielders (exousias) against cosmic forces (kosmakratores) of the darkness of this age, against evil spiritual powers in the realm beyond our senses (ta pneumatika tes ponerias en tois epouraniois) (Ephesians 6:12):

This is also the experience of "modern man" and if some rationalism refuse to acknowledge this fact it would be difficult, either to understand why the arms race and global injustice exist side by side. With the forces of liberation, emancipation and justice.

Whether it is male domination or injustices entrenched in social structures where women also participate and even dominate (Mrs. Thatcher, the late Mrs. Gandhi, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Mrs. Golda Meir and others), they are not purely flesh and blood phenomena, but the result of a synergia between human beings and demonic forces.

Any liberation theology or feminist theology which does not recognize the presence and activity of the demonic forces as well as of the powers of the kingdom even in their own activity to be faithful to the faith and tradition of the Christian Church, even if that tradition may need demasculinisation.

To re-interpret the Christian witness to the bodily Resurrection of the Crucified Human Person, Jesus Christ, in the context of this Cosmic polemos is a necessary precondition to a relevant re-expression of that witness today. Neither Bultmann, nor Liberation or Feminist theologies provide us that necessary re-interpretation of the traditional witness in an adequate way. "Jesus Christ - Risen to overcome all evil forces and powers", can not be adequately witnessed to in an exclusively secular-rationalist-existentialist or liberationist-feminist framework. To the present writer, that much becomes extremely clear, in the wake of the Punjab incidents and its sequel in the brutal and dastardly assassination of Indira Gandhi.

What we need perhaps, even to understand the nature of the Resurrection, is more re-mytheologisation rather than de-mytheologisation. Human beings are unable to express their grasp of the deepest dimensions of reality through words and concepts. They need myth and ritual. And the myth and ritual of the Holy Eucharist is that through which we show forth Christ's death and resurrection until he "comes again".

The Resurrection of Christ as an Event.

When the Church proclaims that the Crucified One is risen, she does so not as a result of historical investigations or on the basis of indubitable proof. If either historical investigation or sure proof were the basis of our proclamation, then there is no need to call for faith. What is established by the modern historical method or by sure proof needs no "belief".

The Church's proclamation is not based on the Biblical witness either. The source of the Church's testimony is the Apostolic testimony a first-hand witness which is not derived from the Scriptures, but to which they bear witness. Through the scriptures Christians receive confirmation of the fact that the Apostles - Mathew and John, Thomas and Paul and others affirmed that Jesus Christ, the crucified son of man is truly risen in the flesh and ascended into heaven. Ultimately it is faith - faith in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in the Church that confirms the message of the Resurrection and makes it live - not historical investigation or incontestable evidence.

And because our faith depend, upon the Apostolic testimony in the Apostolic Church, the question of whether it was a historisch or geschichtlich even does not interest us.

In the very nature of the case the historical resurrection is not an event that can be established by historical investigations. That does not, for those who believe, make it a less historical event. Nor is it merely geschichtlich for the believer in the sense that it is only a fact that some people in the past did believe in a physical resurrection.

For the Church this event, which opens time and lets them enter each other, is the very heart of its existence. Once this event is questioned or disbelieved, one falls into unbelief and automatically becomes outside the Church which is founded on faith. It is not the question of the freedom of a human being, either to believe or to disbelieve. Only by belief and baptism does one become incorporated into Christ and therefore a Christian. To deny that belief is to become not only non-Christian, but anti-Christian.

That is recognizably strong language. But it is the language of faith, and I hope the language of love which does not shy away from the truth.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ - Its Meaning Today.

No doubt we need new language today, not in the historicity or otherwise of the Resurrection, but on its meaning for the Church's witness and for the life of humanity. There is no harm in someone trying to develop some new language to describe the unique character of the event of the Resurrection but that seems less important to me than living its meaning and participating in it through the myth and ritual of the Church.

Its meaning can be articulated in words only very partially and very tentatively. I would make the following personal affirmation, as one believer's expression of the Church's faith in which I share:

the Crucified One, is risen from the dead. He is risen indeed. He has overcome death and the powers of darkness and evil. He lives. He rules in the heavenlies. In Him the new humanity, man and woman, is inaugurated. In the new humanity Christ is present, the Holy Spirit is present, the kingdom of God is present. For the new humanity death holds no terrors, and evil cannot use the power of death to frighten the Sons and daughters of the kingdom. Evil and darkness continue to operate and darkness continue to operate so long as these end times last. They can still hurt and wound, scare and torture, assassinate and exploit. But the sons and daughters of the kingdom do not fear death and will bear unfearing witness (marturia) to the kingdom of love, justice and truth, even to the point of laying down one's life. My confidence in the power of the Resurrected Christ gives me a strength and fearlessness in the struggle against evil forces.

My hope is not only in my own personal and bodily resurrection, but as I pray every day, that God's reign may come on earth as in heaven, and that God's will be done by human beings understanding God's will and fulfilling it in love. My hope is thus for Christ's body, that it be united intimately and fully with Christ by the Holy Spirit, free from every trace of evil or fear of it. This is an eschatological hope which must ever find historical expression. I do believe that in a manner which I cannot now conceive or express, the Lord will gather his own from the dust, forming the new humanity by the Resurrection of the flesh.

My hope is also for humanity as a whole - that God's kingdom may come in all parts of humanity, in its personal and corporate life, in the life of the nation, in their economic, political and knowledge structures. This too is an eschatological hope, that when all things are finally reconstituted, the renewed humanity, with the Church as Body of Christ present within it, will appear with Christ, as the humanity which He has assumed in

the Resurrection. This means that all societies here have to move closer to that hope here in history.

My hope is not only for the Church and for humanity as a whole, but in fact for the whole creation within which the Church and Humanity subsist. All things have to share in the liberty of the children of God. The creation itself must be set free - free from evil and death from decay and disintegration, to share in the reality of the created order as restored in Christ. For in Him were all things created and in Him all things are to be reconciled.

My hope lets me struggle and strive without panic or disillusionment. I can struggle and strive along with others, that my daily prayer be fulfilled - Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done. I work for the same thing as I pray for. And if failure comes, frustration does not overwhelm me. My faith in the Risen Lord helps overcome that frustration and any element of despair, letting me go on in hope. And if others misunderstand, persecute or speak evil or kill, I know that that too belongs to the kingdom in history. For it is One who said I am Alpha and Omega, who also said:

"Happy are you when they reproach you and persecute you, saying falsely all kinds of evil words against you, on my account. Rejoice and be glad, because your wages are great in the realm beyond. For thus they did persecute all the prophets who lived before your time".

(Mt. 5:11-12)

CONCLUSION

My position implies the following theses of faith:

a) The healing of modern man or woman requires the re-acquiring of a capacity to experience truth by more than words and a superficial rationality; he or she will have to be trained in myth and ritual and in the sacramental mysteries of the Church, in order to appropriate fully the faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We in our time have to overcome the Enlightenment.

b) The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact, a historical fact, not in the sense that it can be established by the recently developed methods of historical investigation, but because it is the truth, the truth of the Gospel, proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit and acknowledged by faith.

c) The Resurrection has its bearing and impact on three levels of existence: the ecclesial, the human and the cosmic, in all three of which we as christians participate. In the ecclesial realm the Resurrection becomes the basis and centre of the Church's existence; everything depends on it and it is so acknowledged. In the realm of humanity, there may be no such acknowledgement; but there is a new humanity, namely the humanity of the Son of God, inseparably and unconfusedly united with the Triune God in Christ. This humanity is present where the Kingdom of God is present and can be discerned by the faithful. In the cosmic realm, the powers have not yet fully conceded their defeat; the demonic powers are still allowed to operate, for they have something to do with human freedom and its development. It is in the struggle with these demonic as well as angelic forces that human freedom still has to be experienced, expressed and developed. That is the way of the Cross.

d) Though the demonic powers which use evil and the fear of death as well as deceit as their weapons still operate, the Christian does not fear them or their weapons. Armed with the

whole panoply of God, he or she or groups of people confront the powers of evil, knowing fully that they have the power to crucify people. In accepting that cross without fear or anxiety is the power of the Resurrection.

e) The universe is inter-connected; not only the visible that is open to the investigations of modern science or to our senses, but also in its three levels; the Church, humanity and the cosmos. These are three spheres in all of which Jesus Christ incarnate is present, and the Church is present with Him as His body. The power of the Resurrection now operates in all three realms. Ultimately all three levels are to be set free from the bondage to decay and death and from the power of evil.

-- Paulos Mar Gregorios.

The Christology of the Eastern Fathers

(Dr Paul Gregoris)

The Eastern Fathers were mostly Asians or Africans. There were very few Greeks among them. It is a misconception spread by bad scholarship in the West that all the Eastern Fathers were Greek. They were as much Greek as C.S. Lewis, is ~~English~~ the Korean who writes in English, is English. The Asian and African fathers wrote in Greek or Syriac, the two international languages of the Mediterranean, like ~~our~~ English and French these days. Occasionally ~~one~~ ^{one} finds a real Greek like Methodius of Olympus, but most of them were Asian (Ignatius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Irenaeus, etc) or African (Cyril of Alexandria, Athanasius, etc). The ~~best~~ ^{best} Christian theology always came from Asia or Africa, not from Europe - Latin or Greek. Even most of the Latin theologians (Augustine, Tertullian, Cyprian) came from Latin-speaking North Africa.

But these Asian-African theologians who wrote in Greek were writing in particular contexts. They did not write their theologies, however, to tackle ^{the} economic and political problems of the day. The Roman and Byzantine empires were tyrannical and oppressive. It

social evils of the day like the indolence and callousness of the rich, the vanity of empresses, or the arrogance of rulers. But they did not create a Christology to meet these problems.

Their Christology was directed mainly against church people who misinterpreted Christ. There were many such ~~mis-~~ mis-interpretations which deviated from the Apostolic testimony about Christ. Two among these stood out, as capable of undermining the very foundations of Christianity. Both were products of intellectuals, who wanted to make Christianity acceptable and palatable to the non-Christian, and relevant to contemporary non-Christian thought.

The two serious misunderstandings of Christ came from what we today call Gnosticism and Arianism in their various forms. The fact of the matter is that these are still the two most important errors prevailing in the church today, especially among intellectuals in the west. And to clarify our own Arian understanding of Christ over against these false teachings would be ~~the~~ ^{our} main purpose in looking at ^{samples of} the Arian-African theologians of an earlier, more classical period in the history of Christian thought.

The two serious misunderstandings of Christ came from what we today call Gnosticism and Arianism in their various forms. The fact of the matter is that these are still the two most important errors prevailing in the Church today, especially among intellectuals in the west. And to clarify our own Asian understanding of Christ over against these false teachings would be our main purpose in looking at samples of the Asian-African theologians of an earlier, more classical period in the history of Christian thought.

The Gnostic Danger Today and Then

Elaine Pagels has written a very enthusiastic account of The Gnostic Gospels ⁽¹⁾ picturing the way of thinking of Gnostics in the early centuries. She herself gives the impression of an ardent Gnostic, (though she expressly denies this) who takes up the cudgels on behalf of the poor Gnostics who had been persecuted and suppressed by the early Church.

Elaine Pagels is a Harvard graduate who teaches at Barnard College (Columbia University). She studied Gnosticism in order to see "the relation between politics and religion in the origins of Christianity". She examined Gnosticism for what it was - "a powerful alternative to what we know as Orthodox Christian tradition" ⁽²⁾ She identifies the issue between Gnostics and Christian Orthodox as

"What is the source of religious authority? For the Christian, the question takes more specific form: What is the relation between the authority of one's own experience and that claimed for the Scriptures, the ritual, and the clergy?"

For Christians today who are revolting against the authority of "the Scriptures, the ritual, and the clergy", the classical debate between Gnostics and Orthodox Christians becomes a central issue. The Gnostic vision of Christ seemed attractive to many intellectual Christians of that time, while the official Church kept on condemning it and branding it as heresy. For Elaine Pagels, Irenaeus the Asian theologian who later became Bishop of Lyons in France is the primary villain. Over against the Gnostic Christian's vision of a Christ of solitude, a Christ without the paraphernalia of Church or ritual, sacraments or dogma, clergy or creed, Irenaeus insists as a Christ with the Church, with "the canonically approved Scriptures, the ritual, and the clerical hierarchy".

The Gnostic Christian saw himself as "one out of a thousand, two out of ten thousand", a real disciple, an unusual person, one specially chosen out of many to receive the great mystery of the universe, which ordinary people can never know. The solitary path of Gnosticism has historical relations with the Asian tradition, particularly with the Hindu tradition of finding God as the true being of one's own self. As the Gospel of Thomas puts it

"If you bring forth what is within you,
what you bring forth will save you.
If you do not bring forth what is within
you, what you do not bring forth will
destroy you" (4)

The allusion here is to Jesus' teaching that the Kingdom of God is "within you" (LK 17:21). Whatever Aramaic expression Jesus used (the Syriac translation uses legau menkoon which means - in your (plural)midst), the Greek expression entos humon does not expressly refer to the individual's inner being, but to the common existence of the community. But the Gnostics found the expression very convenient. They had this unusual capacity

- (a) to individualize the Gospel and the Kingdom;
- (b) to interiorize it;
- (c) to make salvation simply a matter of bringing out what is already within oneself;
- and (d) to make oneself the constitutive noun for existence.

As opposed to this the early Christian fathers like Ireneus affirmed:

- (a) The Gospel is addressed to human communities, and elicits a community response; the Kingdom comes not only within a person's consciousness, but also within the structures of human social existence in community;
- (b) The Kingdom is not a matter of interiority alone, but a social reality within which the inner experience of personal salvation has to be located;
- (c) Salvation comes from God, not from within oneself; but through faith God indwells human beings as persons and the church as a community and directs both by the Spirit that dwells in them;

- (d) the constitutive centre of authority is Christ and the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the body of Christ, the community of faith, with its scriptures, its sacramental mysteries, its apostolic tradition and testimony, its own mind and thought.

The Gnostics of the 2nd and 3rd centuries considered the organized church as unfaithful, as teaching something else than what Christ taught, just as many Christians do today. All Christian Gnostic writings show this tendency of criticising the official church as heretical, while setting themselves up as the true Christians. They laughed at baptism, and about people who "go down into the water and come up without having received anything".

For the Gnostic, a Christian was to be known by his personal quality; for the Orthodox a Christian was identified as one who ^{was} initiated into the community of faith, and participated in the life of that community. And this meant, adherence to the authority structure of the community. As Ignatius of Antioch, the disciple of the Apostles, put it at the beginning of the second century:

"Flee from Schism as the source of mischief. You should all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ did the Father. Follow, too, the presbytery as you would the apostles; and respect the deacons as you would God's law. No one should do anything that has to do with the Church without the bishop's approval. You should regard that Eucharist as valid which is celebrated either by the bishop or by someone he authorizes. Where the bishop is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Church Catholic He who honours the bishop is honoured of God. He who acts without the bishop's knowledge is in the devil's service." (5)

The Gnostics could not accept this. Of course it was embarrassing to them that Ignatius was a direct disciple of the Apostles, was the most sincere and devoted Christian known at that time, a hero of holiness, who thought it a joy to lay down his life for the sake of Christ. The strong language they Gnostics usually applied to church leaders as being corrupt, power hungry, avaricious, etc. could in no way be applied to Ignatius. And if history chose to honour Ignatius rather than the Gnostics, there must be a point there.

The reason why Ignatius insisted on the bishop, the presbytery, the deacons and baptism and eucharist as the focal points of life in Christ is not difficult to understand. The Gnostic Christians wanted to be on their own, arbiters of their own faith, without church, ministry or sacraments. This would have been all right, if they could also be faithful to the Apostolic teaching. The apostolic teaching was not, however, available in the Gnostic schools. The Jesus they taught was one who was only in the heart or head of the believer, and not in the life of the community of faith. The Apostolic teaching put all emphasis on the community and on the Eucharist, and the ministry which was responsible for guarding the teaching of Christ. The Gnostics preferred individualist, interioristic, intellectualistic interpretations of Christianity and did not want to associate with ordinary Christians or with their community, with the ministry and the sacramental mysteries which constituted the life of that community. The Gnostics were anti-church, anti-clerical, anti-sacramentarian, as many Asian Christians are today.

Ignatius, the first great Asian theologian, testified to the Apostolic teaching that to be a Christian is neither to have a special experience in one's heart nor to have lofty ideas about Christ; to be a Christian, one's whole life has to be drawn into unity with Christ and with His body the Church; and one has to participate in the death and resurrection of Christ through baptism and eucharist through specific acts, through being incorporated into a specific community with its own structure as prescribed by the Apostles. Christ is flesh and Spirit, man and God - not just Spirit or God. Life in Christ must therefore have its fleshly and human elements - what western rationalists uncomprehendingly mock as 'rituals and ceremonies. The Gnostics, like many modern Christians, had no use for the Church or its life in community.

The Christology of Ignatius was the Christology of the Apostles. In this way of understanding Christ is

One healer

of flesh (Sarkikos) and of Spirit (pneumatikos)
begotten (gennetos) Yet unbegotten (agennetos)
in a human being (en anthropo) God (theos)
in and through death (en thanato) life in truth (Zoe alethine)
both from Mary (Kai ek Marias) and from God (Kai ek Theow)
first suffering (Proton pathetos) then beyond suffering
(tote apathes)
Jesus Christ our Lord. (6)

It is this Apostolic Christology, ad distinct from a Gnostic Christology of personal salvation, that all the Eastern Fathers have taught. For the latter, the Church is integrally one with Christ, as His body, and Christians could not accept Christ without the Church, his body, of which the Christian is a member. Our personal experience of Christ and our personal devotion to Him are important; but these are not what constitutes a Christian. It is participation in Christ through His Body.

Another great 'Star of Asia', Melito of Sardis (+ca 190 AD), echoed the same faith. Christ is the turning point of humanity in its passage from the 'safety' (salvation, solertia) of paradise down into the Fall of earthly existence, under the tyranny of sin and death, back to the bosom of God. He is the new Passover which delivers humanity from the ~~captivity~~ captivity of Egypt. He become the turning point by taking a fleshly body and suffering on our behalf. It is God himself who has suffered and died. And we participate in this divine - human Christ, by partaking of his flesh and blood in the Eucharist. The flesh of Jesus is no phantasy; it is real; and participation in him is also real - material and spiritual. The corporality of God is stressed by Melito over against the Gnostics. The very title of his homily is peri ensomatou Theou (Regarding the Embodied God)

The same anti-Gnostic, embodied understanding of Christ is continued by Ireneus of Smyrna who later become bishop of Lyons in France. This great Asian teacher of the West also saw Christ as embodied in the Church. He expressly attacks the three Christian Gnostics - Basilides, Valentinus and Marcian, all of whom sought to deny the material aspects of Christ and to spiritualize, interiorize and individualise

evil, and God cannot be linked to it. For them the sacraments of the Church are also evil, because linked to material objects. It is the hidden spark of the divine in us that matters, according to the Gnostics. Salvation, for them, is only for the soul, not for the body. Marcion, for example, condemned marriage and sexual inter-course, as well as body and matter.

The most important Christological point in Ireneus is the concept of the Economy of God, which includes Creation Redemption and final recapitulation (anakephalaiosis) The death and Resurrection of Christ are seen not merely as something for our personal salvation, but as the decisive movement in the history of the Creation itself, leading the whole cosmos from dissolution to eternal life. Christ is from the beginning the ground of the created order, for in him, by him and through him all things were created (Johannine Prologue).

The Church is the new creation, and Christ is its head. And the salvation of the old creation is to be incorporated into the new. It is the final recapitulation that will recall the glory of Christ the God-Man, for in Him all created things are to be reconciled to God. While the Gnostics denied all significance to the material world, Ireneus affirmed its participation in the redemption. The Logos hold the universe together from its beginning. But after the Fall, Christ by inseparably uniting a body to himself, incorporates the creation in a new, more intimate, more integral, way into His own body.

This is the tradition of the Apostolic Church. Christ is God who has become a human being, and remains ever divine-human in an inseparable unity between the Creator and the Creation. He was manifested in the flesh, and after His resurrection continues to manifest himself, in the fleshy, corporate body of the community of faith, through the proclamation of the word, through the sacramental mysteries, through the love that binds the community and pours itself out in love of the created order, which has now been united with Christ. It is in union with Him, through the mysteries of baptism, anointment, Eucharist and ministry, that we participate in the healing and life giving energies of the new world.

The struggle between the two different Christologies is still very active in Asia today. Too many Asian Christians have accepted a Gnostic form of Christianity, of Christ in the heart of the individual, but not in the life of the community or in the cosmos.

The Arian Temptation

If the Gnostic-Decetic temptation was the biggest problem of the infancy of the Church, overcome by such stalwart Asians as Ignatius, Melito and Ireneus, the childhood of the Church had to face the greatest of all heresies, that of Arius, Aetius and Eunonius

Arius (ca 250- ca 336) was an African, probably from Libya, who studied in Asia under Lucian of Antioch, and later became a Presbyter in the great African Church of Baucalis in Alexandria. Aetius who died around 370 A.D. was his chief disciple. A native of Asia (a craftsman of Antioch) who went to Alexandria for his philosophical studies in Aristotle, Aetius was the one who philosophically systematized Arianism. Eunonius, another Asian Rhetorician or Philosopher (from Cappadocia) also went to Alexandria and became a disciple of Aetius around 356 AD. His whole life was a campaign against the faith of the Council of Nicea which condemned the teaching of Arius.

It was the hallowed intelligence of the young deacon Athanasius (ca 296 to 373) which defeated the ~~teach~~ teaching of Arius at the Council of Nicea. Athanasius was less than 30 years old at the Council of Nicea. At 22 or 24 he wrote his first Christological treatise: the Discourse on Becoming Human (de Incarnatione or Logos Peri Tes Enanthropeseos). It has no refce to the Arian heresy or the Nicene debate. Athanasius' main attack on Arianism came in his three Orationes against Gentiles. It is from the first of these that we learn what Arius taught, through his Thalia or wedding-songs. Arius' teaching was soft, smooth and sophisticated.

Arius denied that Christ was God. Christ was a created being, created by God out of nothing. Athanasius quotes from a song of Arius, which makes a clear distinction between the Godhood of the Father and the creaturehood of

"The Unoriginate (agennetos) made the Son,
an origin of things generated;
And advanced Him as a Son to Himself by adoption
He has nothing proper to God in proper subsistence
For he is not equal, no, nor one in substance
(homoousion) with him
Thus there is a Three, not in equal glories;
Not intermingling with each other are their
subsistences.
One more glorious than the other in their glories
unto immensity
Foreign from the Son in substance is the Father,
for He is unoriginate.
Understand that the One was; but the Two was not,
before it came to be
It follows at once that, though the Son was not
the Father was, God". (7)

Aetius made this poetic theology more
~~rational and logical: Eunomius set it forth as a clear~~
rational and logical: Eunomius set it forth as a clear
system. Though Arios was condemned at the Council of Nicea,
Arianism not only survived, but in fact flourished and
spread to all parts of the Church, as some contemporary
theological systems spread today. Arianism, in its philo-
sophical form given to it by Eunomius, was extremely attra-
ctive to philosophers, and in its main outline, easily under-
stood by ordinary people- It made the following affirmations:

- (a) The essential nature of God is to be unoriginate.
(agennetos)
- (b) Only God the Father is unoriginate. Therefore He
alone is God. The Son is Begotten and therefore
originate. He cannot be God.
- (c) The Son or Logos is a creature, the first of all
creatures. He was the agent of creation and all
things came to be through him.
- (d) The first of the created beings to come into being
through the Son was the Holy Spirit.
- (e) The Logos become flesh, but not a human being. He
had no human soul. The place of the soul was taken
by the Logos or word of God.
- (f) The Incarnate Christ is thus not of the same nature
as God, being gennetos; He is less than God, subordinate
to God, of a different nature; neither is he of the
same nature as us, for he had no fallen human soul,

This teaching undermines the two pillars of the faith of the Church, which are still difficult to accept for the non-believer: the Triune God and God's becoming a human person, or the Trinity and the Incarnation.

It was at that time intellectually fashionable to deny the Three-in-One-ness of God and the Man-becoming of God. Such denial fitted neatly with the prevailing philosophy in the Greek speaking world of the fourth century - neo-platonism or Middle Platonism. For them the only self-existent being was the Transcendent One, from whom everything emanated. God the Father of Christian theology filled into this niche. The second being, coming out of the One was the nous or the logos, which was the intermediary between the One and the Many. This was the niche for Christ. The third order of being, underlying all multiplicity, coming from the Logos was the psyche or soul. And this was a neat, fitting, place for the Holy Spirit - three different beings, with natures totally different from each other. The Arian Christology fitted neatly with contemporary non-Christian philosophy.

It was in opposing this fashionable Christology that the classical Christian Christology was formulated, not so much by Athanasius, but by one of his successors as Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril (+444). This African theologian struggled with the fundamental questions -

- (a) If the Father is God and the Son is also God, are there two or more Gods?
- (b) How can a single person, i.e. Jesus Christ, be both God and Man ?
- (c) Did Mary give birth to a human person, or to one who is also God ?

Cyril was helped by the struggles of other Asian African theologians before him - especially the Asians Eustathius of Antioch (+330AD), Eusebius of Caesaria (ca 260- ca 340), Diodore of Tarrus (+ca 394), Basil of Caesarea, (ca 330-379 AD) Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389AD) Gregory of Nyssa, (ca 330-ca 395) Evagrius Ponticus (346-399), Nemesis of Emesa, (fl 390 AD) John Chrysostom (ca 347-407)

Theodore of Mopsuestia (+ 428 AD), and even his arch-enemy Nestorius (+ Ca 451 AD), as well as many others. Among the Africans we can count Athanasius and Origen before him.

Western Scholars usually say there were two Christologies the Antiochean or Asian type and the Alexandrian or African type. This is too hastily and overly neat a bifurcation. Alexandrian Christology depended heavily on the Asian debate. It was in Asia that the great cleavage emerged - between the Apollinarian type and the Nestorian type of understanding Christ.

Both Apollinarius and Nestorius were struggling with the Middle Platonist philosophical approaches of their time. Apollinarius focussed on the noys, the second principle of the neo-platonists as the fulcrum of unity in Christ. It was the nous which united the divine being with the human being, the divine nous, pre-existent, the creator of all things taking the centre of the soul-body humanity of Jesus- for the Apollinarius. In opposing this tendency, Nestorius, anxious to affirm the full humanity of Jesus, stressed the joint nature of the full divinity and full humanity in Christ.

It was this debate that Cyril sought to settle, and despite western reluctance to accept it, settled it brilliantly, but by no means finally. The west still has difficulty in appreciating the thought of Cyril, though it is clear today that the very test of the new Christologic, that today arise in the west would be their agreement with Cyril of Alexandria, as far as Orthodox Christians are concerned .

Cyril is much maligned in western historiography. He had the perception to see that while Nestorius' heresy might appear harmless, it would have very significant consequences for the faith of the Church, as the Western Church now experiences. Keeping the divinity and the humanity linked together only by a conjunction - to say simply that Christ was both divine and human as a mere synopsis. It as Nestorius said, Mary gave birth only to a human child and the divinity was somehow attached to this child afterwards, then the two can again come apart, as they have done in western Christology today. The modern trends in the West take Christ's humanity apart, and sees him primarily as a man who mediated new socio-

religious and political values, a man who revealed God's will for the Jews of his time, and perhaps also for others of other times and places as well. As Fr. Schille becckx puts it:

"From this viewpoint the new Jesus images are purely mythical conceptions, the real, non-mythical content of which is nothing other than our own historically new religious experience (with Jesus still seen of ~~course~~ course as exemplar and animator at the time).(8)

The characteristic of most current western Christologies is that 'upward from below' look at Christ, starting with his humanity, reserving considerations of his divinity and pre-existence until afterwards. Many of these works look for the transcendence of Jesus in history itself (e.g. H. Braun, Paul van Buren) ⁹.

A Hulsbosch puts it sharply:

The divine nature of Jesus is only of significance in the saving mystery in so far as it changes and uplifts the human nature. In so far as it does this, we have a new mode of 'being human'.... The divine nature is irrelevant except in so far as it uplifts the human nature; in so far as it does not do this, it has no significance for us; but in so far as it does, we have to do with something really human. If we say: besides being man Jesus is also God, then the 'also God' is no business of ours, because ¹⁰ it is not translated into the human reality of salvation

Nothing could be more unchristian. If what we want is only to use Christ for our salvation, then we can pick and choose within Christ, take what we want and reject what is of no use to us. This is the attitude which the west has used in its imperialist conquest of the world, and is a demonic and despicable attitude, which is the very antithesis of Christianity.

"What think ye of Christ ? Whose Son is He?" That is the question. Not "How can I use Christ for my salvation?" Who is this marvellous person, born of the Virgin, whom the shepherds adore, and who is also the saviour

If on the contrary, one starts with the question, 'what is the most economical form in which Christ can be appropriated for my purposes?', we can be satisfied with some part or aspect of Jesus Christ which we regard as significant for our salvation.

The Christian is not one who tries to use Christ for salvation, but one who has been incorporated into Jesus Christ and His body, and seeks to work out the implications of his God-given new life in Christ. It is as such a Christian that one seeks here to give a brief summary of Cyrillian Christology as the Church has come to accept it.

Cyril's Christology

Cyril himself had to grow in his Christology. At first he was quite happy to summarize the Christology of Athanasius.⁽¹¹⁾ The basic affirmations at this stage are

- (a) "The word was made man, but did not descend upon a man"⁽¹¹⁾
- (b) It is the same Person who was fully God and fully human.
- (c) The same person suffered and performed the miracles
- (d) It is the Divine-human Christ whom we adore and worship - not a man or a creature.

Later on Cyril sets himself to a more precise formulation, of the relationship between the divine and the human natures of Christ. Cyril rejects the nestorian terms enoikesis, sunapheia and henosis schetike. This means it would be wrong to say that

- (a) the divine nature indwells the human nature, (enoikesis)
- (b) the two natures are inter-connected (sunapheia)
- (c) the two natures have a firm unity (henosis schetike)

He uses rather the expressions

- (a) henosis kata phusin (union in nature)
- (b) nria phusis tou logou sesarkomene (the one nature of the incarnate word)

The philosophical term for this kind of unity is hypostatic union, though Cyril himself did not use it. The Word of God did not cease to be the Word of God by becoming a human person. Neither did the humanity of Christ become a different kind of humanity from our own. Neither was there a mixing of the two natures, nor can there ever be a separation of the divine and human natures in Christ.

The consequences of this inseparable unmixed union are enormous. We better look at these consequences before we go on to the understanding of the expression 'hypostatic union.'

In Jesus Christ we have a new kind of humanity. It is a humanity that died and rose again, sinless. It is the humanity that is inseparably united with God. This is the great new thing that has come into being through the Incarnation. It is in this new humanity that Christians participate by virtue of their baptism, of their anointing with the Holy Spirit, and of their participation in the body and blood of Christ. This is what really matters - the participation in this new humanity that is indivisibly and inseparably united with God. This is how I am saved, by participation in the new humanity which has overcome sin and death - not by some experience, not by my faith, ~~but~~ ~~by some experience, not by my faith,~~ but by my being taken by the Grace of God into His Son's Body to be a member thereof. It is in that Body and in that new humanity that there is eternal life.

Once this fact is grasped, it is easy to understand the teaching of the Church about this union of the divine and human in one person.

"We say that the Word of God came together with His proper flesh, in union indissoluble and unalterable"...

"Even though He became Man, He possesses the being of God without casting it away; nor do we say that any change took place of the flesh into the Nature of the Godhead, and we hold that neither did the reverse take place, for the nature of the Word has remained what it is even when united to flesh."

Cyril of Alexandria (12)

Cyril was prepared to leave the mode of union as beyond our understanding, but insisted on the unconfused and inseparable union:

"Godhead is one thing and manhood is another,
according to the mode of being in each;
Yet in Christ they have come together,
in a unique manner beyond our understanding,
into union, without confusion or change. But the
mode of union is wholly incomprehensible"
Cyril (13)

This united one divine -human nature is the one in which we participate - in the humanity of the Word of God.

Cyril's position is best summarized in the twelve positions condemned by his 12 anathemata against the teachings of Nestorius. Nestorius, we should remember, was fanatically anti-Arian, and got the government to enact a law against those who say that Christ is a mere man.⁽¹⁴⁾ The main charge against Nestorius was that he refused to acknowledge that the baby that Mary bore in her womb was God. This was the meaning of the expression Theotokos, God-bearer, applied to Christ's mother. If the baby was not God, then Godhead was somehow added to Jesus after he was born a man. Nestorius' argument is that God is without a mother who would be older than God. But the logical consequence of saying that what Mary bore in her womb was only a human infant is to deny that he was God from the beginning of His incarnation, and that the divinity simply came into conjunction with a human Jesus.

Cyril's 12 anathemata therefore insist:

- (a) Immanuel born of Mary is truly God from the beginning and therefore Mary is God-bearer or Theotokos;
- (b) God the Word, very God of very God, has been personally united to flesh, and it is the flesh of Christ, the Word Incarnate, the God-Man;
- (c) The person (hypostasis) of the One Christ cannot be divided into two, as if there were two Christs - one divine and one human;
- (d) One cannot assign the words and actions of Christ to two different persons; it is the same person who hungers and who raises Lazarus from the dead;

- (e) One cannot say that Christ the man was clothed with God; Christ is God by nature.
- (f) One cannot say that God the Word is the Lord of the Man Christ; for Christ the God-Man is himself Lord.
- (g) One cannot say that the glory of God was imparted to Christ the Man. Christ's glory is the one he had before the creation of the world;
- (h) One cannot say that Jesus the Man is to be co-worshipped along with God the Word, that too would be wrong.
- (i) One cannot say that Jesus Christ was glorified by the Holy Spirit, as if he had to receive his glory from another; Christ shares Lordship and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- (j) Christ was made our High Priest and Apostle of our confession; this does not mean that a mere man was made our High Priest; it means that God the Word Incarnate as a human being was made the High Priest.
- (k) It is not only Christ's divinity that is life-giving; his flesh, which is the flesh of God the Word is life-giving.
- (l) It is not the case that the human being alone suffered; it is Christ the God-Man who actually suffered and died and rose again, to become the first-born from the dead, in whom others receive eternal life.

Some modern theologians ^{are} ~~are~~ anxious to dismiss Cyrillian Christology as merely Greek or Hellenistic philosophizing. What he has said in the twelve anathemata has nothing to do with Greek philosophy. It is simply the Gospel truth, which the Apostles taught and the Church has always believed.

What is Greek philosophy is the doctrine of "hypostatic union". This may be difficult for modern man, and so he is at liberty, since he claims to be so smart, to produce a better and more contemporary interpretation of the union of the divine and the human in Christ's person and nature. But no modern doctrine should fall into the heresy of Arius, Aetius, and Eunomius who denied that Christ was God; nor should they follow the heresy of Nestorius which held that divinity was only in conjunction with the humanity of Christ.

divinity was later added. If a contemporary philosophical interpretation can be provided by the new theologians without falling into the above heresies, that would be interesting to hear. But if some careless Christian simply says that he has no need for the divinity or pre-existence of Christ, the Church can only say to him that what he is teaching is not the faith that the Apostolic community has ~~held~~ held since the beginning.

Hypostatic Union

The word hypostasis, as far as Christian theology is concerned, was first used in the Trinitarian context. In secular Greek thought the word has had a plethora of different meanings: hupo = under, and stasis = standing. The compound word thus means that which stands firm underneath - the foundation, the substance, the actual existence, the real nature. Hypostasis is a biblical word, in fact. In Hebrews 1:3 the word is used to mean person (charakter tes hypostaseos autou - express image of his person). The modern Greek version of the New Testament translates the word 'hypostasis' as 'ousia' or being. In Hebrews 3:14 the word hypostasis has a different meaning; translators have great difficulty here. One can translate vv 13 & 14 thus

"But appeal to each other each day,
so long as it is called 'today',
so that none of you becomes
insensitive (hardened) by the mis-
leading ability of sin. For we have
become participants in Christ,
if we hold on firmly to that initial
hypostasis ~~in~~ until the end."

Many people translate 'hypostasis' here as confidence. It could also mean the Person Christ in whom Christians believed in the beginning (archē). Scholars are reluctant to accept this interpretation for they have a preconception that the discussion about hypostasis and our participation in the hypostasis of Christ starts only much later in Christian history. This is only a conjecture on the part of the scholarly community for which there is no scientific basis.

Christ in whom Christians believed in the beginning (arché). Scholars are reluctant to accept this interpretation for they have a preconception that the discussion about hypostasis and our participation in the hypostasis of Christ starts only much later in Christian history. This is only a conjecture on the part of the scholarly community for which there is no scientific basis.

In Hebrews 11:1 we are told that faith is the "hypostasis of the hoped for" (elpizomenon hypostasis), where it could mean substance, reality, assurance, basis, foundation. St. Paul uses the word in ^{2 cor} ~~Hebrews~~ 9:14 and 11:17 to mean self-assurance, but the modern Greek version translates en tei hypostasei tantē tes kaucheseōs ^(9:14) as anaphorikos pros to zētēma touto tes kaucheseōs mas (in relation to the object of my boasting). In 11:17 where the RSV again translates hypostasis as 'confidence', the Modern Greek uses to thēma or theme. That seems the real meaning of hypostasis, i.e. 'the underlying substance or reality'.

What is the underlying substance or reality in Christ? That is one way of putting the Christological question. A philosophical answer to that question was provided only
by Severus

of Antioch (ca 465-538). The west has developed a peculiar kind of myth about Severus being a Monophysite, while it was he who laid the genuine foundations for the accepted Christology of the Christian Church.

The formula of Chalcedon only repeated some phrases from earlier formulations of Cyril, Leo^{of Rome} and Dios. The philosophical problem was sorted out by Severus, whose writings though originally in Greek, are preserved mainly in Syriac. Chalcedon did not define hypostasis (person) or physis (nature). It was not the task of a council to do so in any case. Chalcedon did not solve any theological issue but served only to split the Church in two, the ^{Asian-African} majority being against Chalcedon at that time.

Severus has been studied by an Asian theologian Dr. V.C. Samuel (15). Severus writes:

"God the Word is one hypostasis. He united to himself hypostatically one particular flesh, which was endowed with a rational and intelligent soul, and which was assumed by Mary Theotokos... The (human) child, for instance, was not formed by itself, as heretics teach. But God the Word.... from the very beginning, namely from the first moment when the flesh animated with soul and mind was formed in the womb, was united with it. Therefore, there was no

being of the flesh and its union with you
the Word. ~~the~~ Since the one Christ is one nature
and hypostasis of God the Word incarnate
from Godhead and manhood, it necessarily
follows that the ~~same~~ is known at once
as consubstantial with us as to manhood.
The same is the Son of God and the Son of
Man. He is not, therefore, two sons,
but is one and the same Son. (16)

The point is that the Word of God is
the second hypostasis or Person in the Triune God.
It is this hypostasis that personalised humanity
in Christ. Christ's humanity does not exist
independently of the hypostasis of the Son of God.
The attempt to take that humanity apart,
which characterizes much modern western
Christology is a repudiation of the
faith of the Church. Whether theologians want
to acknowledge the deity and pre-existence
of Christ, whether they find Christ's divinity
useful or not, is irrelevant. What matters
is that the faith of the Church is that the
Word of God is the One hypostasis in
whom the ~~the~~ divine and the human have
become inseparably united. If anyone seeks to
separate that humanity from that deity,
he acts contrary to the faith of the Church.

For those who regard the Church as a voluntary organisation which one joins, and then chooses whatever view one wants to hold about Christ, such Christology may seem useful, relevant or attractive. But that is irrelevant for one who is incorporated into the One Body of Christ. There, in that Body, there is one understanding ~~and~~ of Christ: He is the Word of God who has become Man. It is the hypostasis of the Word, of the same nature as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, who has now made personal (hypostatic) the new humanity of Jesus Christ. This is what is meant by hypostatic union, the ^{inseparable} union of God and Man in the one ~~incarnate~~ hypostasis and physis of the Word of God Incarnate.

x

x

x

Conclusion

There is always room ^{in the church} for fresh understanding and fresh appropriation of the meaning of ^{the} Christ into whom we have been incorporated. That faith can be expressed in new philosophical terms, if there is a philosophy adequate for that task. At the moment no such philosophy exists, as far as the present writer, who has delved extensively into philosophy both western and Eastern, knows. What comes out as new versions of Christology are largely rehashes of the old heresies of Gnosticism, Arianism and Nestorianism.

The Christology of the Eastern Fathers does have an enduring quality and can be made extremely relevant to current issues and questions. How that can be done will require full length treatment in another paper.

Notes

1. Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels,
Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1981 (original 1979) 214 pp
2. ibid. p. 181
3. ibid p. 177
- (4) Gospel of Thomas 45:30-33. - Nag Hammadi
Library (New York, 1977) 126
5. Ignatius of Antioch, ~~Letter to Philadelphia 9:2~~
~~Magnesian 9:2~~ His letter to Ephesus 19:1 says
Smymeans 8 ~~+~~ and 9
- (6) Ignatius, ^{Ep. ad.} Ephesus 7:2
7. Athanasius: Contra Arrianum. 2:2.
Eng. Tr. Library of the Fathers of the Holy
Catholic Church, Vol VIII, Oxford, 1842, pp 95-96
- (8) Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus, An Experiment
in Christology, ^{original Dutch, 1974,} E.T., Crossroad, New York, 1981
p. 587
9. H. Braun, Jesus, Berlin, 1969.
P. van Buren The Secular Meaning of The Gospel,
New York, 1963
do Theological Explorations, New York, 1963
10. A. Hulsbosch, 'Jezus Christus, gekend als
mens, beleden als Zoon Gods' in Tijdschrift
... ~~255-256~~

Modern "Library of Theological Literature, London, no date, pp 216-218.

11.

Athanasius, III Discourse against
the Arians, paras ~~30~~³¹-32

"The Person who was God from everlasting,
the Sanctifier of those to whom He came, and
the great Agent of all His Father's Counsels,
was made man for our sakes... He,
although He was God, had His proper human
body, formed and organized exactly as
ours, and made for our sakes and
salvation.. And on account of this, the properties
of human nature are said to be His,
because He existed in that nature, and He
hungered, thirsted, suffered, laboured, and
was perfectly sensible of those infirmities
of which our flesh is capable. On the other
hand, those powers and operations, which were
peculiar to ~~him~~ Him as Divine, such as
raising the dead to life, restoring sight to
the blind, and giving health to the sick, are
ascribed to Him, because He did them by the
instrumentality of His own Body.... It was
on this account, that when our Lord's flesh
or human nature suffered, it was not separated
from the Divine nature, and therefore, the Word
of God is rightly said to have suffered....
Thus the same person, who performed such mighty
works, and effected our Redemption and Sanctification,
is said to be judged and condemned, to be scourged,
... to a cross, to die, in

Against Nestorius 1815 1. 3.
Cyril of Alexandria, Oxford, James Pate. 1881, pp 16 + 17

(13.) That Christ is One, ^{HERMIAS} the dispute with Hermias
ibid op. cit. p. 264.

(14) Nestorius' Letter to the Monks, cited by
op. cit., Preface. pp xxi-xxii

(15) V. C. Samuel,

(16) Severus, Contra Grammaticum, C.S. Co
Vol III, 101, and 93, pp 148, 184 and 227.
Cited by V. C. Samuel "The Understanding of
• The Christological Definitions" in Wort und
Wahrheit (~~Annals~~ Report of the Second Ecumenical
Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental
Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church,
Sept 1973), Vienna, 1974, pp 22-23.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NON-CHALCEDONIAN
CHURCHES

~~(Fr. Paul Verghese)~~

The Monophysite Churches are five in number today: the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch, the newly (1959) established Patriarchate of Ethiopia, the Catholicates of Armenia and India. The total number of Christians in these five churches may be estimated at a little less than 17 million. They are all in communion with each other, but none of these churches is in communion with the Churches of Byzantine Christendom.

What is it that divides them from Byzantine Orthodoxy? Historically, the barriers have existed for some fifteen centuries now, beginning at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The centuries that have intervened have only driven the prejudices on both sides deeper into the social subconsciousness.

Are the barriers insuperable today? It is the present writer's sincere conviction that they are not. But we cannot jump over them too lightly. We must first examine the rationale of the barriers. If they serve no essential purpose today, then they should be destroyed, not skipped over. Two things are necessary before we can be sure that the barrier is not meant to protect something very valuable in the faith: a critical examination of the historical record, and a frank expression of the views on both sides. This paper is an attempt to scratch the surface. The real spadework will have to be done by scholars of greater competence.

Events Leading up to Chalcedon

At the beginning of the fifth century the four great Primatial Sees of Christendom were vying with one another for prominence. Alexandria, who had given to the Church that great Champion of Orthodoxy, Athanasius, to whom we owe in a considerable measure the defeat of Arianism; Rome, centre of the world, bastion of orthodoxy,

hallowed by the martyrdom of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul; Constantinople, the new Rome, seat of the Emperor, Glorified by the prestige of two illustrious prelates, both stars in the firmament of life-giving oratory, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom; and Antioch, whence the Apostles went out into the world, home of St. Ignatius, the Prince of Martyrs.

Alexandria was further noted for a succession of three powerful and ruthless prelates whose lot it was to do battle with the Patriarchs of Constantinople: Theophilus (385-412) who so wounded the feelings of Asians by deposing St. John Chrysostom (398-407) that the latter were for long unable to forgive the Church of Alexandria; St. Cyril (412-444), nephew of Theophilus, who deposed Nestorius Patriarch of Constantinople (428-431); and Dioscurus (444-454) who succeeded in deposing Flavian, (Patriarch of Constantinople, 446-449).

But how could these victories be won on Asian soil by these strangers from Alexandria? One can only hazard a guess in reply, an inference not unsubstantiated by facts. Monastic life had already mushroomed in Asia Minor and Syria by this time. There were several monasteries in and around Constantinople and Antioch, with hundreds of monks in each. Egypt was the spiritual home of the monks. The See of Alexandria, for these monks at least, borrowed from the glory of St. Antony, St. Pachomius and St. Macarius of Egypt. Besides, for monasticism in the East at least, Arianism is the major demonic element in thought. The denial of the complete deity of Christ is the ultimate purpose of the Devil, and Arianism is his tool. The monks were always afraid that the Antiochene Christology, in its eagerness to affirm the full humanity of Christ against the teachings of Apollinaris, was in danger of either Arianism or Nestorianism. And they generally found the Alexandrine Christology, with

its emphasis on the flesh as assumed by the Logos, the Logos remaining always the subject of the actions of Christ, much more safe. And this is the teaching of the two illustrious Alexandrians, St. Athanasius and St. Cyril.

This general affinity between eastern monasticism and Alexandrine Christology was to play a large part in the ecclesiastical wrangles of 449-451 and in the sequel. The monks were a very influential group, because of their 'holier' life¹. The Archimandrites around Constantinople had great prestige and had free access to the Imperial Palace².

70-year old Archimandrite Eutyches was no more of a theologian than his ex-patriarch Nestorius, and they were both as inoffensive as they were muddle-headed. But he was an important man in Constantinople, known to the Emperor and to the great Patriarchs of the Church. Domnus, Patriarch of Antioch, had written to the Emperor accusing Eutyches of Apollinarianism. Eutyches had written to Leo, Pope of Rome, defending himself against such charges. The Great St. Cyril himself had sent word to Eutyches requesting his good offices with the Emperor against Nestorius.

Since the old monk wrote no book, we do not definitely know what he had taught in his monastery. Pope Leo quotes him as having said: "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before

Union, but after the Union I confess one nature."³ The Pope is astonished, he says to Flavian in the letter which has now come to be known as the Tome of Leo, that "so absurd and perverse a profession of his was not rebuked by a censure on the part of any of his judges" - an obvious slur on the theological efficiency of the Primate of Byzantium.

Leo apparently could not be sensitive enough to the distinction between Latin ^{natur}~~nature~~ and Greek...~~physis~~.... Further, it would appear that he took the preposition ex- in the sense of in. However foolish Eutyches might have been, he could hardly have said that the Incarnate Lord existed in two separate natures before the Incarnation. Neither is there any reason to believe that Eutyches actually held that the divine nature absorbed the human nature and caused it to disappear. This was the pope's misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

The local Council convened by Flavian at Constantinople was frustrated and irritated first by Eutyches's refusal to appear before it, and when he did appear, his unwillingness to subscribe to the formula "in two natures after the Incarnation". In any case they deposed Eutyches, more for insubordination than for heresy.

Pope Leo, on the other hand, had other plans. He keenly resented Alexandria's attempts to take away the primacy which

Rome claimed to be hers. Eutyches was a friend of Alexandria. Flavian of Constantinople a weak and peace-loving man, could not challenge the Egyptian Church, even though he shared in the general view that the Alexandrians "are more delighted with tumult than any other people; and if they can find a pretext, they will break into the most intolerable excesses; nor is it scarcely possible to check their impetuosity until there has been much bloodshed"⁴. So Leo takes upon himself the task of reasserting the authority of his See.

The opportunity for this offers itself to Leo when Eutyches appeals to the Pope against his unjust excommunication, and besides the Emperor himself writes to him about what was done in the Imperial City to a prominent Abbot. Flavian, on the other hand, considered the matter settled, and did not find it necessary to do anything further about it. Leo writes to Flavian in a very patronising tone: "We do not understand as yet with what justice he has been excommunicated. But we desire to hear your account of what has been done, and to have the whole matter laid before us, since we, who would have the decisions of God's priests maturely arrived at, can form no judgment for either side, till we have heard a true statement of all the proceedings"⁵. The whole letter tacitly assumes that Flavian ought to have reported the matter to Leo, and that the final decision in the matter is to be made by the Pope, This was on February 18, 449.

Flavian meekly replies, but is careful to point out that it was just as much his own duty to prevent the perversion of the faith as it was Leo's. He sends Leo the proceedings of the Council which deposed Eutyches. He then asks Leo to give his "concurrence in the vote by which he has been canonically deposed." That is all that is required to prevent a general council which can have disastrous consequences, according to Flavian.

Leo is promptly surprised at "the tardiness of your letter", and writes the famous Tome which was later to be canonised by the Council of Chalcedon.

Leo is determined not to miss the opportunity to use the Eutyches affair as a test case. But Dioscurus of Alexandria is also determined to see that Leo would not be able to get away with it.

The Emperors convoked a Council on the 1st of August 449 at Ephesus. All the patriarchs were asked to come with ten Metropolitans and ten other bishops each. The Archimandrite Barsumas⁶ is also invited, with full voting privileges, to represent the monasteries. Emperor Theodosius II "following the Rule of the holy Fathers" nominated Dioscurus to preside in the synod.

Dioscurus took full advantage of his position. Eutyches was exonerated and reinstated. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, was excommunicated on the charge of innovation on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed. Leo's Tome in which he elaborated the claims of the Petrine See, was conveniently ignored and not even read in the Council. Even Domnus of Antioch was deposed by the Council, even though he had signed in favour of Flavian's deposition. Dioscurus had won a crushing victory in the first round.

Leo was irate. He wrote to the Empress Pulcheria denouncing the Synod as a 'Council of Robbers and not of judges', and the west has subsequently made the name Latrocinium stick. He appealed to Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, and to several other members of the Imperial families in East and West, to convoke another council. But Theodosius, who was to make the final decision, refused the appeals of the other members of his family. He felt that the matter had been settled at Ephesus, and had no desire to reopen the issue. Anatolius, who succeeded Flavian at Constantinople, agreed with the Emperor. Leo sent a delegation to the Imperial city to persuade the Patriarch.

If Theodosius had not in the meantime fallen from his horse and died, the whole East would probably have remained Monophysite,⁷ in the sense in which this doctrine is understood by the non-Chalcedonian churches.

The new regime in Constantinople was determined to reverse the policy of the previous Emperor. Dioscurus was no longer in favour at the Court. Theodoret of Cyrus, an outspoken Dyophysite now becomes the favoured prelate. Anatolius and the bishops at Constantinople are now forced to accept the Tome of Leo, and to anathematize Eutyches.

The Emperor and Empress are now anxious to build up the Patriarchate of Constantinople as the chief See of the Empire, and so Leo's plans to hold a general council in Italy get no support from them.

So the Council was held in the East - at Chalcedon, just outside of Constantinople, in 451. An impartial historian would be willing to see that even although three times as many bishops were present at Chalcedon as at the so-called Robber Synod, the proceedings were no more dignified. Obviously, and to the utter discredit of the Church, many of the Bishops who were present in both councils, sided simply with what they understood to be the Imperial will. Dioscurus

found himself abandoned by most of his former supporters at Ephesus, who were all now confessing to the Imperial Commissioners pitifully: "we have all failed". Only the bishops of Palestine, Illyricum and Egypt stayed with him.

In the third session, the Imperial Commissioners absented themselves, and gave the Council over to the presidency of the Papal legate, Paschasinus. The case of Dioscurus was singled out for discussion at this session. He refused to make his defence without the presence of the Imperial Commissioners, fearing violence. But the Papal legate went ahead with the charges, and pronounced judgment without much ado: "Leo, through us and the present holy Synod, together with St. Peter.....who is the Lock of the Church and the foundation of the true faith, deprives him of his episcopal office and of all priestly dignity"⁸. One-hundred and eightyfive of the bishops present (out of a total between 500 and 600) recorded their endorsement of the papal decision. When Rome had thus done the dirty work for the Emperor and Empress, the Imperial Commissioners seem to have returned. They now insisted on a new 'definition' being drawn up, indicating the true faith, to which most of the Bishops objected. Anatolius of Constantinople resumed the chair for this session. But since the first draft prepared did not contain direct mention of 'two natures', the papal legates objected again. The Commissioners feared a division of East and West, for the majority were against any mention of the two natures. So a special commission is appointed under the chairmanship of Anatolius of Constantinople to find a compromise formula. But the majority objected again, and insisted on approving the formula without mention of 'two natures'. Anatolius himself stoutly

opposed the 'two natures' formula.

The Imperial Commissioners were sorely perplexed and sought counsel from the Emperor. The Emperor replied, offering three alternative courses of action: a) leave it to a special commission to draft a new definition with the 'two natures' formula; (b) ask each bishop to submit a draft, and the Council decide in plenary on the definition; (c) hold another Council in the west. Many of the erstwhile timid bishops now seem to have got back their tongue. They defy the Emperor and cry out; "Let the formula stand, or we depart; these are Nestorians; let them be off to Rome".

The Commissioners now use their authority much the same way as Dioscurus had done at Ephesus. The issue was put to them in such a way as to leave no doubt as to the kind of reply the Imperial Commissioners required. A committee was appointed, and they retired with the commissioners and the papal delegates, to come out with a new definition, "We all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ.....or and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged on (if) two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, never to be separated,...."⁹ The four adverbs were safeguards against Nestorianism and against Eutychianism as generally understood.

Emperor Marcian attended the sixth session of the Council in state, and gave his approval to the formula. There remained only the further need to squelch the see of Egypt and to exalt the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Canon xxviii saw to that. Against the protests of Rome, numerous bishoprics were added to the jurisdiction of Constantinople, and her position as second in rank was finally affirmed. Leo's subsequent cavils that Constantinople was not an

Apostolic See were of no avail. The Emperor had triumphed, or at least he thought he had. Rome's challenge of Chalcedon was hardly effective. But the people of Egypt and Syria, almost with one voice, rose up in protest against this, 'Graecising, Nestorianising Council'. The Bishops returning from Chalcedon to Egypt and Syria were regarded as traitors by the people, and in many cases subjected to violence.

A Contemporary Analysis

But what is it that present-day Monophysites object to in the definitions of Chalcedon?

As a personal view the present writer would submit four criticisms of the definition.

1. The document as it stands at present appears selfcontradictory. The first part, ending with the words _____¹⁰ seems to have been taken from the first draft prepared with the hearty approval of the whole council, and is fully acceptable to us. The second part, beginning with the words: But forasmuch as, to the end, appears to be the work of the special committee appointed by the Imperial Commissioners, and explicitly contradicts the first part in both tone and content. The first part reads like a devout ecclesiastical document; in the second part, the personal animosities and ambitions of some of the parties present at the sitting of the committee are ostensibly present. It cites the two documents which are now to be approved, that of Cyril against Nestorianism, and that of Leo, against Eutyches. Cyril is referred to as "the blessed Cyril, pastor of the Church of Alexandria", while Leo is spoken of as "the Ruler of the greatest and elder Rome, the most blessed and most holy Archbishop Leo". The Tome itself "agrees with the confession of the great Peter,

and is a common monument erected against heretics"; the document goes on lavishing praises on the Tome, which is in marked contrast with the brevity with which the Epistles of St. Cyril (which were actually much more enthusiastically received by the Council than the Tome) are commended

The self-contradiction itself appears in that while the document insists that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is the unalterable symbol of the Orthodox faith, it goes on to find another formula for confession of faith. This, to us seems an objectionable innovation, neither permissible nor necessary.

We are prepared to condemn any heresy that teaches that Our Lord is not fully divine and fully human; we can anathematise Eutyches, on the understanding that he taught that our Lord's flesh was not consubstantial with ours; but we see no need for a new formula.

2. If a clear statement of right Christological teaching is necessary, then it should be in the form of an elaboration and not in the form of a definition. The mystery of the Incarnation, we feel, is no more illumined by the Chalcedonian definition than by the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol. As an elaboration it is thoroughly inadequate, inasmuch as it has no clear mention of the hypostatic or prosopic union, which is the orthodox teaching of both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches.

3. While 'of two natures' is orthodox doctrine and is acceptable to us 'in two natures' is heretical and erroneous teaching,¹¹ if by this is meant that the human and divine natures of Christ remain ^{disjunct} ~~distinct~~ and separate, in such a way that some of Christ's activities can be ascribed to His divine nature and some to His human nature. If there is union between the two natures, and not merely conjunction as the Nestorians

taught, then what is united is one, and it is a divine-human nature. A mere doctrine of communicatio idiomata is inadequate to describe the fact that God has become Man and not merely indwelt in Man.

4. We are prepared to accept the notion of the two distinct natures as objects of thought, provided the one Incarnate nature of the Logos made Man by hypostatic union is first acknowledged.

All this has the further implication that the Tome of Leo cannot have the status of a canonical definitive document. It ~~er~~rs in 'dividing' the nature of Christ, which is the substance of the Nestorian heresy. As St. Cyril says in his third letter to Nestorius: "To one Person (Prosopon), therefore, must be attributed all the expressions used in the Gospels, the one incarnate hypostasis of the Logos (for the Lord Jesus Christ is one according to the Scriptures)." This is also the point of the third and fourth anathemas appended to this letter.

In general we hold unhesitatingly to the views of St. Cyril: One Prosopon, one Hypostasis; but if we have to speak of Phusis, we would again use the phrase of St. Cyril, "after the union, no division; union in nature, not by conjunction"¹² or "one Son even by nature" (

But we find it difficult to accept the Chalcedonian definition for two simple reasons: It is heretical and it is inadequate. The prejudice against Chalcedon amongst us is very deep-rooted, and has found its way into our formularies of sacerdotal ordination. We are offended when the Chalcedonian churches regard us as heretical. For our Fathers who opposed Chalcedon stoutly, namely Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria (d. 477), Severus of Antioch (d. c. 539) and Philoxenos of Mabbugh (d. 523) were not considered heretics by the Chalcedonian churches. On the other hand these Fathers regarded Chalcedon as a heretical council, though they would not denounce all the Churches of the Patriarchates of Rome and Constantinople as heretical.

I have not been able to trace the history of the attitude of the Chalcedonian churches towards the non-chalcedonian churches, but I shall not be surprised at all if such an enquiry would reveal it as a fact that it is only after the aggressive evangelism of the Portugese and Spanish missionaries began that the general view that the Monophysites were heretics gained ground in the West. In England the idea probably goes little farther than the time of the Post-Reformation controversies. More careful scholarship in the west dates from Assemani (1687-1768), but it is interesting to listen to the judgment of William Palmer: "Although some of the Monophysites in later times have expressed themselves in terms that seem to render the difference in doctrine but inconsiderable, there seem

to be no reason to suppose that they form a portion of the catholic church, having been originally excluded from that church as well by its decree as by their own separation from us: nor have they ever ceased to treat the doctrine of the church as heretical, styling us Chalcedonians, and reckoning us among the heretics to this day"15.

Opinion in the west has not generally moved much further from Assemani and Palmer ; in fact it seems to have regressed in some cases.

But today, do we not have to look at the problem afresh? Has not our situation changed and the unity of the Church become an imperative call from God? Conversation in an atmosphere of friendliness has become easier today. We know a little more about the semantic subtleties and differences of of nuance in the terms substantia, persona, natura, hypostasis, prosopon, physis etc. Our knowledge of history has become more accurate.

It is the present writer's sincere conviction that, given patience and understanding on both sides, the accumulate prejudice of fifteen centuries should not continue to be an insuperable barrier against the Byzantine and Monophysite churches finding their unity in the Eucharist in the very near future. Ut omnes unum sint!

NOTES

1. See e.g. Socrates Eccl: Hist: iv:23ff
2. See Hefele, A History of the Councils of the Church, Eng.
Tr. Edin. 1883. Vol. iii pp 134, 187.
- 3.
4. This is the personal judgment of the famous church historian
of Constantinople, Socrates (380-450) H.E. vii: 13.
5. Leo to Flavian, Ep. 23.
6. of Syria, now a saint for the Monophysites.
7. See R.V. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, London, 1953
pp. 96-97 Sellers, who cannot be accused of being partial to
the East in general or to the Monophysites in particular, remarks
"Assuming that each side had remained adamant, East and West,
it is reasonable to suppose, would have gone their separate way
the East, upholding what had been determined at Nicea and con-
firmed at Ephesus, and speaking of the 'one nature' (=one
person) of Jesus Christ, the west continuing to preserve its
traditional doctrine, first defined by Tertullian, that Jesus
Christ is one person, and that in Him are the two natures of
Godhead and manhood. But the unexpected happened, and the
history of Christian doctrine followed a course which at that
time none could have anticipated".
8. Mansi, vi. 1048. Dioscurus had already excommunicated Leo
on his way to Chalcedon.
- 9.

The question of which preposition appeared in the final draft
or , is still disputed. The latin has in, which is
understandable, since this was Leo's view. Some greek texts
that have come down to us have ; but if this was actually
used, it is difficult to see how the Monophysites could have
objected to it so vehemently.

10. in the English translation, with the words, to those who
accept it faithfully it sets forth in addition the Incarnation
of the Lord.
11. see Gregory Nazianzen: Ep. ad Cleonidum 101. Migne PG 37:177
Oratio 37:2 also cf. St. Cyril of Alexandria 3rd ep. to
Nestorius para viii.

12. See 3rd anathema. 3rd ep. to Nestorius.
13. ibid 5th anathema.
14. See the judgment of Sellers, op. cit. p. 269: "In the first place, it should be understood that the Monophysite theologians were not heretics; nor were they regarded as such by leading Chalcedonians or again, "Had the leaders of the Monophysites been unsound in the faith, the task facing the upholders of 'two natures after the union' would have been easier. But the latter had to deal with teachers-not 'heretics'".
15. William Palmer: Treatise on the Church 3rd ed. London. 1842 Vol. i. p. 322.

The Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug

(Paul Verghese)

This paper tries only to select some aspects of the Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug, who was Bishop of the city of Mabbug (Hierapolis) in the early sixth century. These aspects are chosen with reference to the ongoing discussion among theologians of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox traditions regarding the Person, Nature and Will of Christ.

This learned Syrian theologian (c.440-50) and his works have been studied in some detail in the massive work of Fr. André de Halleux of Louvain*. His importance in the post-Chalcedonian Christological controversy is second only to that of Severus of Antioch, though he is definitely much less known in the West.

~~Philoxenos~~

Philoxène de Mabbug, sa vie, ses écrits
sa théologie, Louvain, Imprimerie
Orientaliste, 1963. 571 pages.

His Discourses were ^{edited &} published with an English translation by E. A. Wallis Budge, London 1894

Nature of Theology ~~The distinction~~ For Philoxenus theology has to transcend sense-experience. It is not simply reflection on the claims of Revelation, but is an aspect of radical, ontological transfiguration of man himself by the contemplation of divine mysteries into which of the Incarnation into which he is incorporated by baptism. Theological reflection is thus growth in faith, and ~~his~~ growth in holiness is an indispensable condition for a profound apprehension of the divine mystery.

"Becoming without Change" - This is his basic formula. He starts from the Biblical Axiom "The Word became flesh", and the Divine Logos is the Subject of the Incarnation for him throughout. But how to understand this process? Who became? From where? What did he become? Why? These are the four questions to which he applies himself. The question of "how" he regards as beyond rational comprehension. The wrong ways of understanding he regards as basically Alogism, docetism and Synousiasm (or Conjunctionism).

Becoming and Assumption.

Philoxenos' problem was this - Did Christ ever exist as only a man? He saw the attempt to speak about two natures as presupposing the existence of a hypostasis of man with human nature; to him it was impossible to conceive of a nature without a hypostasis.^x And so he looked with some suspicion ~~to~~ on the Christology of his opponents as stating that what God the word assumed was a full human being with a hypostasis and nature. This meant to him that man became God in Christ. He wanted to affirm the opposite. God became man in Christ.

He preferred therefore the theory of "becoming" ~~rather~~ to that of "assumption", because assumption meant to him the assuming of "a man other than God". One can assume only that which existed; but one can become something through a certain event - namely the Word became flesh, remaining Word.

The theophanies of the O.T. were assumptions by God. He assumed the burning bush

See esp. the letter to the Monks of Serran 9-10
"Two natures.... are evidently also hypostases, for nature considered apart ~~from~~ or enumerated cannot but be also hypostasis. If there are two hypostases, as there are two natures, then the conclusion is inescapable that there are also two Sons, and therefore also two Gods." Quoted by Hallens p. 331

or the form of the three angels that appeared to Abraham. The difference between the Anthropomorphisms of God in the O.T. and those in the N.T. is that the former are metaphors, while the latter are mysterious realities. In the bosom of the Virgin, God is contained completely, as man finite and limited. This is the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Philoxenus admits that the idea of Assumption can also be supported by Scripture. Heb 1:2:17 says clearly: ou gar dēpou aggelōn epilambanetai, alla spermator Abraam epilambanetai. But the Word assumed the seed of Abraham without change in his own hypostasis, according to Philoxenus.

Becoming without change. But There is a difference between divine becoming, and other spatio-temporal becomings we know of. The latter always implies change. But God cannot change. Thus Philoxenus seeks to affirm becoming without change, passion (suffering) of the impassible, death of the immortal. He thus avoids theopaschianism and docetism. He affirms Christ's consubstantiality with us, as well his consubstantiality with God, but the two cannot be confused.

Here, of course, is the perpetual

illogicality of the great mystery of the Incarnation, which different formulas can witness to, but no formula can resolve finally.

The immutability of God consists in three fundamental characteristics of God - His eternity, His perfection and His freedom.

Eternity God can "become" without change, because he "existed" without "becoming". This is the position of Athanasius, Cyril and Philoxenos. Change belongs to those who exist in time and space, not to the Self-Existent in eternity. To change is to cease to be in part and begin to be in a different form.

Perfection He is perfect. He did not become man because He needed something. He did not cease to be God when He became man. The becoming of God does not belong to a class with other becomings. It is something we know from Revelation. He becomes man, not because He needed something, but for us, for our sake, not for Himself. He became, in other words, out of love and not out of necessity. His becoming is a new creative act, of freedom and love.

Freedom In other words, He became, because He willed so in freedom and love, even as He did in the case of the first creation. The ~~change~~ incarnation does not originate in the nature of God, but in His will. It is an aspect of His omnipotence, which is His basic freedom. It is thus not in contradiction with His nature, but neither is it a necessity of His nature.

To the possible argument that "God is unchanging; so He cannot become", Philoxenos replies: "It is God who becomes, so He becomes unchangingly".

5. One of the Holy Trinity - God the Word.

The Logos is one of the Three hypostases of the Holy Trinity. What happens to all three hypostases, of the same ~~nature~~^{nature} ousia, when one of them becomes? When we say "God the Word" we are not uttering a tautology. God signifies the Common nature or ousia, and Word signifies the person or the hypostasis. The first distinguishes God from His creature; the second distinguishes among the persons of the Trinity.

Philoxenos affirms the perfect unity of the Divine ousia in all acts ad extra

* Here we notice the confusions in the terms hypostasis, ousia and physis current in the whole Christological debate. Did Athanasius himself make a clear distinction between the three? Onoma, the Syriac word for Person, does not necessarily mean, even in Ephrem the Syrian, hypostasis in the Greek philosophical sense.

Cosmic Christ and Cosmic Salvation (PG)

In some of the later Pauline Epistles like Colossians, in Hebrews, and pre-eminently in the Johannine Prologue, one encounters the biblical view that the Cosmos (a) came to be through Christ, (b) subsists in Christ, and (c) will be reconciled and subdued by Christ.

This undoubtedly means that the Incarnation of Christ has positive significance not only for the Christian Community, but also for the rest of Creation. The various levels at which this cosmic salvation is effective are only hinted at in the New Testament. More explicit is Psalm 104 where Yahweh declares his purpose for the whole of creation. Hebrews 2:5ff. corrects the Old Testament idea that the nations are under the control of the angels of the nations, and affirms that they are now "put under the feet" of Christ; the Epistle admits that "we do not now see that all things have submitted to him (to Man), but we see Jesus", who having tasted death, has risen and ascended to heaven, and rules the whole creation as an incarnate human person, *who is the New Adam through whom God's dominion over the Creation is exercised*

In Colossians 2:9ff. we are told that Christ reigns over all the powers of the cosmos, that everything is fulfilled and consummated in Christ. He is the first born of the new creation. He thus participates with the members of his body in the new creation and rules over it. This new creation of a new heaven and a new earth and Christ's rule over it is what we have called the Cosmic Christ and Cosmic Salvation. It means, as St. Paul says in Romans 8:21 ff. that the whole of creation is to be liberated from its present enslavement to death and disintegration, sharing in the qualities of the resurrected bodies of the sons and daughters of God. This is the positive significance of the present "groaning" of creation, agonizing for this liberation, which is linked to the liberation of human beings from the slavery of death.

If the creation is thus to be redeemed along with human beings, then its value is certainly not merely temporal or instrumental. But what needs to be clarified is the various levels at which this cosmic salvation is experienced by the various levels of being in the earth:

- (a) Christians - consciously acknowledging Christ
- (b) humanity as a whole - being transformed by values derived from Christ
- (c) animals and plants - experiencing the redemption in a manner as yet

unknown to us

- (d) in organic matter - dancing its own rhythm, waiting for the redemption which will reconstitute it.

All this should be understood, however in the light of three other factors:

- (a) the powers of darkness which militate against Christ's dominium, ~~and~~ ^{are} still operating;
- (b) the suffering of Man, the groaning of Creation, and the groaning of God; and
- (c) the "day" of Judgement ^{which} will test everything with "fire," ~~and~~ ^{being} redemption ~~is~~ effected only through death, resurrection and judgement.

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM ? ELEMENTS FOR AN ECUMENICAL CHRISTOLOGY TODAY*

~~(Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios)~~

(The Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel celebrated his 75th birthday in December, 1987. In this article Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Gregorios pays tribute to the outstanding contribution of Father Samuel to Orthodox Christological understanding. Father Samuel's scholarly insights into the classical debates on Christology, especially the Chalcedonian question have immensely helped to advance the theological dialogue of the Oriental Orthodox Churches with the Byzantine Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches in our time. His profound knowledge of the Syrian theological tradition and early church history combined with his transparent openness to other traditions – Christian and non-Christian – makes his theological work extremely interesting and inspiring.) ~~The Star of the East pays homage to the integrity of his Christian vision and his creative work. Ed.)~~

The Revd. Dr. V. C. Samuel has played a unique and pioneering role in making Oriental Orthodox Christology intelligible as well as acceptable to others. Most of us who came later into the debate about the nature of Christ owe our basic insights to his outstanding work at Yale University in the fifties of our century.

This became very clear as we began the first "Unofficial Consultation between Theologians of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches" held at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, from August 11-15, 1964. In August 1989, we should celebrate the silver jubilee of this historic event in the life of the ecumenical movement.

*Article taken from *Orthodox Identity in India : Essays in honour of V.C. Samuel*, Edited by M.K. Kuriakose, Bangalore, 1988.

Father Samuel's paper on "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" affirmed that phrase from Cyril of Alexandria (+444 A.D.) as "a most crucial linguistic tool to conserve the Church's faith in the person of Jesus Christ". It made clear to leading Byzantine theologians present like Karmiris, Meyendorff, Florovsky, Romanides, Nissiotis, Konidaris, and Borovoy that the Oriental Orthodox agreed with the Byzantine Orthodox in condemning the teachings of both Eutyches and Nestorius. It was Fr. Samuel's paper which convinced them. There were other dignitaries present like the present Syrian Patriarch of Antioch and Armenian Catholicos of Antelias; it is no exaggeration to say, however, that there was no one on the Oriental Orthodox side who could convince the Byzantine theologians on the basis of historical scholarship that there was no essential disagreement between the Byzantines and the Orientals on the substance of Christological teaching. I had the great privilege of organizing, along with the late Nikos Nissiotis, that first unofficial theological conversation (Aarhus, 1964) as well as the three subsequent ones (Bristol 1967, Geneva, 1970 and Addis Ababa, 1971). I can say without any hesitation that the presence and contributions of Fr. V.C. Samuel were the crucial element in determining the final outcome of these conversations.

Recently (September 1987), the first *official* joint sub-commission met and produced an official statement that is in basic continuity with the four unofficial conversations.

We can summarise the present consensus in the following way :

1. Jesus Christ is fully a human being, of the same nature as fallen humanity, though not sinful like them.
2. Jesus Christ the Second Person of the Trinity, remains fully God, of the same nature (homo-ousios, consubstantial) as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word of God, personalizes humanity in his own hypostasis or person, without ceasing to be God. There is only one hypostasis, the

hypostasis of God the Word. There is no separate Man Jesus with a separate human hypostasis.

4. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God unites in his hypostasis the nature of God and the nature of humanity in one single hypostasis and one united divine-human nature, though the Byzantines prefer to say two natures inseparably united.
5. The Word of God Incarnate is thus one single hypostasis with an inseparably and unconfusedly united divine-human nature. It was the same one who was begotten of the Father before the ages and who was born of the Virgin Mary in the fullness of time.

These fundamental agreements however point to two questions. The first one is, if both sides have always held the doctrines that they now affirm, how come they were divided into two irreconcilable groups, calling each other heretics? The second question is—given this Christological consensus, what ecclesiological imperatives ensue from it for Christian life today?

Both questions have immediate significance to our situation today, and we need to expend a little thought on the response to these questions.

Why church disunity despite doctrinal unity ?

It is an interesting question for deep research. The Byzantine emperors made herculean efforts to resolve the Christological controversy that ensued before and after the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). The schism between the Byzantine Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox came into effect only with the work of Jacob Baradeus at the end of the sixth and beginning of the Seventh centuries. And the churches have remained dis-united for the past thirteen to fourteen centuries.

The sources make it clear that the conflict between the Byzantines (Hellenistic Greeks in present day Turkey and Greece) and the Orientals (Syria, Palestine and Egypt) was less theological and more political-economical and socio-cultural.

Byzantine imperial policy was neither consistent nor reliable. In 449 at the Second Council of Ephesus, it was the conciliatory and pluralistic policy of Emperor Theodosius II (401—450) that allowed Dioscorus of Alexandria to triumph over Hellenistic machinations. His successor Marcian (306—457) was the leader of the Hellenistic movement in the Empire, and when he ascended the throne in 450, after having organized the death of Theodosius by a fall from his horse while hunting, actively persecuted the Syrians and Egyptians and sought to impose Hellenism on them. He used military force to get his proposal accepted at Chalcedon and after Chalcedon. In his desire to repress and destroy the Asian African civilisations of Egypt, Syria and Palestine, he got into an alliance with Pope Leo I (440—461).

It was not the Christological controversy that led to the post-Chalcedonian schism, as much as the revolt of Asia-Africa against a domineering Graeco-Roman civilisation. This was the reason why the most reconciling formulas like the *Henotikon* offered by Emperor Zeno in 482 did not bring peace. The issue was socio-cultural rather than theological. For 200 years Byzantine emperors followed a unifying policy in theology (*henotikē*), which did not succeed simply because the socio-cultural aspect was not adequately taken into account. Even the so-called Fifth Ecumenical Council which tried to correct some of the errors of Hellenistic theology by leaning to the ante-Chalcedonian side failed to pacify the Asians and Africans.

As one of the less perceptive pro-Chalcedonian scholars from Greece put it at the first unofficial conversation “The enforcement of the dogmatic decisions (*horoi*) of Chalcedon, as this was attempted in the year 451—457, resulted in a sharpening of the peril to the unity and integrity of the Empire since a considerable majority of the native population had gone over to the Monophysites” (p. 58). There was of course no “going over to the Monophysites”, because the category “Monophysite” was one artificially created by the Byzantines. The Asians and Africans knew their Christology, and advanced no doctrine of *monē phusis*, which means *only* (one) *nature*, but taught *mia phusis*, which means one single (united) nature. And this teach-

ing of the Asians and the Africans has not varied from then to this day.

What was at stake was a cultural imposition of hellenism on the Africans and Asians. They saw the Council of Chalcedon as such an imposition, and could not see any sense in the Byzantine insistence of "two natures after the union", except that of cultural domination.

Today the situation is similar when the Western Church, both Protestant and Catholic, seeks to impose a terminology and framework born in the internal conflicts of Europe on the Oriental Churches. We are grateful that the Byzantine Orthodox have woken up to the nature of this cultural imposition by the Latins and West Europeans on the Eastern churches, but they are as yet insensitive to the fact that the domineering spirit of Hellenism still plays a very negative role in keeping the Orthodox together. Most of Christian Asia and Africa fell to Islam, in reaction against this European domination. We in Oriental Orthodox Churches have survived in a decimated form, but we have also a natural resistance to western categories of thought and action being imposed on us. This constitutes a major ecumenical problem today, even for the unity of the Asian or African churches, Culture has so much to do with autonomy and identity, that it becomes a factor much more powerful in dividing or uniting churches.

The Ecumenical Movement as a whole is now so dominated by western culture that non-westerners who have not been initiated and trained in western culture feel ill at ease in the movement. The question of the disunity of the churches cannot be adequately studied without taking into account the domineering role played by western culture in the present ecumenical movement. Culture can help unite or divide—in a big way.

x

x

x

The more important single question, then as today, is the one Christ himself asked: "who do you say that I am?" (Lk. 9:20). If we answer in the words of Peter in St. Luke's Gospel,

i.e. "The Messiah of God", we still need to answer the questions "Who is God? What does His Messiah do?".

On those two questions there are dozens of answers proffered in the churches. But these answers, though divergent in each church, do not directly lead to schism today. Why is it that a minor difference in Christology led to a schism in the fifth and sixth centuries, while much more substantial divergences today can be contained in the same Church? Could it be that we do not take Christology as seriously as the ancients did?

For the Oriental Orthodox, the two questions are integral to each other. It is because God is He who is revealed to be the Messiah that the Messiah does what he does. "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me"; as the Johannine Christ says (John 7:16). "I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me" (John 5:30).

The difficulty of some modern Christologies is that they start with a prior conception of what the Messiah should be doing, and then read that Messianic conception back to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. If yesterday salvation from eternal damnation was what we wanted, we made out the Messiah to be a "Personal Saviour". If political-economic liberation is what we want today, then we make the Messiah a political-economic liberator. We even develop theories about all previous theologies and biblical exegeses having been expressions of the dominant class, and thereby absolve ourselves from the need to know the Tradition. We become free to liberate theology from its bondage to class interests, and free to create a new liberation theology according to our own pre-conceptions of what God should be doing.

The real task of Christology today is a formidable one. The avenue that scholars have been exploring-in search of the historical Jesus- has turned out to be a blind avenue. Even the historical method cannot yield for us a completely accurate Moses or Jesus, Alexander or Napoleon. All personalities have their historical existence only in terms of *what other people understood about them.*

The classical Christian position has been that Christians accept Jesus Christ as the Apostles understood them; that seems to be the meaning of the adjective 'apostolic' qualifying the Church. But is that not too narrow an interpretation? The Apostles knew Jesus Christ at first hand, in a way in which subsequent generations could not know him. They also received the direct revelation of the Spirit after Pentecost. But the doctrine that the Revelation of the Holy Spirit ceased with the death of the last Apostle seems to have little theological warrant.

The Spirit of God leading us into all Truth was not a process that ceased in the first century and goes on till the last day and perhaps beyond.

Even going by the Apostolic testimony recorded in the New Testament, there are three dimensions of Christology which we have to keep in some balance today.

In the first place there is the oikonomic-ecclesiological relation of Christ to the members of his Body the Church—a relation initiated by faith, Baptism and Chrismation, and sustained by the great mysteries of the Church, principally the Eucharist. This is, at least in theory, an intimate, personal, communitarian, material-spiritual or "Sacramentally sealed relationship which is unique to the members of the Body, the Church. To extend this relationship to "nominal Christians", "latent Christians" and so on is quite unnecessary and pointless.

But the second relationship of Christ is to all humanity. It was not Christian humanity that the Son of God assumed. As a human person Jesus Christ is consubstantial with all human beings—whether they be Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Marxist or Buddhist. It is the whole of humanity that has been sanctified by the Incarnate Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the saviour of humanity—not just of Christians. He is Saviour of the world—(*ho Soter tou kosmou, vere Salvator mundi* (1 Jn 4:14; Jn. 4:42). He is the saviour of all human beings (*Soter panton anthropon*—1 Tim. 4:10), though especially of believers. He is also the "Saviour of the Body" (Eph. 5:23), our Saviour (Jude 25, 2 Pet. 1:1,11;3:18. Titus 1:3,4; 2:10,13; 2:4,6 etc, etc.)

We will have to use our imagination to see how Christ can be the Saviour of all human beings. I suspect, however, that the best we can imagine in this matter, would still be wrong. But let us leave wide open that possibility that Christ is the Saviour of all human beings, with whom He is consubstantial and whose body he has assumed.

There is a third relationship which we should not overlook, which is already implied in the expression: "Saviour of the world". The relation of Christ to the universe as a whole is often overlooked or underplayed in many Christological treatises. And yet the Apostolic testimony is clear.

"In him the universe was made
Nothing made was made without him" (Jn. 1:3)
"The mystery of His will...to bring all things
In heaven or earth together under one head even Christ"
(Eph. 1:10)

"In him were all things created
Those in the heavens and on earth
Things visible and invisible.....
all things were created through him and for him
He is before all things, in him all things hold together
For it was God's good pleasure that in him should dwell all
plenitude
And through him to reconcile all things to himself".
(Col. 1:16-20)

"The Creation itself shall be set free
From its present bondage to corruptibility
And made to share in the glorious freedom of the
children of God" (Romans 8:21)

It is thus the central teaching of the Apostolic tradition that Christ is a three-fold Saviour—Saviour of the Church, Saviour of all humanity, and Saviour of the whole universe in all its dimension—those open to our senses and those that are not.

Liberation theologies can write this off as ruling class

ideology if they wish. But for those committed to the apostolic tradition, there is no escape from the truth. Only when we can develop a Christology which does justice to all three dimensions in the same stroke can we have a truly Christian Christology. Christ's work in the three dimensions are different, but related to each other—in the Church, in humanity, and in the cosmos. All three dimensions have to be related not merely to the Incarnation or the saving economy of Christ's earthly ministry, but also to the other two aspects—Christ as Creator and Christ as Final Reconciler. Only a Christology that holds together the three aspects—creation, redemption and eschatological fulfilment can be an adequate Christology.

It is in this context of three-dimensional, three-aspect Christology that we can find the ultimate meaning of the hypostatic union of the divine and the human in Christ. For whatever we say about Christ as redeemer or final fulfiller applies not simply to God, as Barthianism implied. It is Christ the divine human person who is the Redeemer and Saviour of the Church, of humanity and of the cosmos. And any understanding of what it means to be a Christian should make plain the significance of Christ being a divine human person, and our full consubstantiality and participation in Him.

This means that no "secular" Christology, which deals only with the world open to our senses, and no "other-worldly" Christology that sees Christ as only Saviour of souls, would do. But the integrated treatment of the three dimensions and the three aspects (for Christ the Incarnate divine—human person is also Creator) should make clear the distinctions as well as the relations among Christ's work in Church, humanity and Cosmos. This would mean interpretation of Christ's relation to all Church activity, human activity and cosmic (including nature, environment, but also much more) activity. Such a Christology should do justice to science/technology, political economy and culture/environment. But it must do more. It must also penetrate beyond the veil to that invisible realm where Christ the divine-human person is now seated on the throne of authority "at the right hand of the Father". Most current Christologies fail at this point—either due to an obsession with the political economy or

to an undue reverence to the critical canons of a European Enlightenment rationality which cannot penetrate beyond the veil.

One more point should be mentioned, but not developed here. There is no authentic Christology that is not integrally related to the Triune God and particularly to the operations of the Holy Spirit. An adequate pneumatology also should deal with the three dimensions and the three aspects of Christ's work, parallel to and inseparable from it. The Spirit is Creator, Redeemer, and Fulfiller. The Holy Spirit works in the Church, in humanity and in the cosmos. Only a proper understanding of the larger work of the holy Spirit in giving form and significance to everything, in creating life and sustaining it, in leading all things to perfection, in pouring out love, power and wisdom can make Christology authentic and alive.

The Spirit is at work in a special way in the Church, the community of faith, the Body of Christ. But the Spirit is also at work in the human environment, in agriculture, in industry, in services, in communications, in science and technology, in the political economy, in art and culture, in creating meaning and significance, identity and community. The Spirit also operates in a divine-human way, and Her work in the Church should not be separated from Her work in humanity and the Cosmos.

Fr. Samuel's brilliant work lays the foundation for this. Much work, however, still needs to be done to make Christology and Pneumatology truly life-giving and unity-creating.

THE FINALITY OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE AGE OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

by

PAUL VERGHESE

What a vague, clumsy, and uninspiring title! But then, that is the way some of us theologians speak, and you have in sheer charity to put up with us. Perhaps some of you who are closer to reality would suggest for us an adequate phrase which more inspiringly expresses the main point of our common quest.

It seems we have tried to load off too many of our urgent concerns into that title. First, we are all honestly worried about the loss of assurance about anything absolute in our secular culture. We want once again to affirm Him, our Lord and Master, as the Alpha and Omega of all things. The phrases in which we expressed the uniqueness or absolute-ness of Jesus Christ are all worn thin; we need a set of fresh concepts, which have some relevance to the life of the world, in which to express our Christian Faith.

Secondly, our major intellectual rivals in Asia are also challenging the Christian message precisely at this point of the Finality of Christ. Both Hinduism and the varieties of Buddhism have now come of age and refuse to be bullied by the Christian missionary condemnation of their religions. In fact they have taken the battle into our camp, and the number of Buddhists and Hindus is steadily on the increase in the West. New forms of syncretism are rising up all over Europe and America, and we have to speak clearly the message of Jesus Christ in this context.

Some of my colleagues are also worried about "religion in general," which seems to become increasingly a concern of many good men everywhere. These good men see the need for religion and are prepared to support any kind of religion. Religion is good for morality. Religion makes good loyal citizens. Religion may be able to deal with the juvenile delinquency problem, the divorce problem, and the many other social problems. Religion gives a good emotional glow to our culture and makes us feel a bit more secure. Prosperous nations and governments also seem to be deeply interested in religion, because it

helps to preserve order and loyalty, both absolutely necessary for the efficient running of the economy.

Religion is thus in danger of being prostituted to serve our human ends, and my friends are anxious to liberate the Christian message from the category of religion altogether. There may be detected in this effort, especially by a cynic like me, the attempt to rescue the old concern for "the uniqueness of Christ" from the inroads of the phenomenological and descriptive schools of comparative religion. However that may be, I feel quite sure that we cannot keep the Gospel in a vacuum. It has to be embodied in the life of a divine-human organism, the Body of Christ, and it is by no means fair or honest to make the contrast between the Gospel and Religions. We must speak about the Church and other religious societies, and it will be less than useful to create a special category called the "Christian religion" as distinct and separable from the Gospel. Our comparisons must not be between the reality of other religious societies and an abstract concept called the Gospel, which we are always tempted to equate with the whole of Christian teaching when it so suits us.

The need to find genuine meaning and significance in the other religions, and to extend the horizons of our ecumenism beyond the confines of the Church and the "secular world" which is after all only a part of the world, has suddenly become imperative, and in our understanding of the Finality of Christ in the age of universal history we must learn to assume a more positive attitude towards these renascent religions, in order to achieve a truly oikumenical ecumenism.

Another of our concerns is the new shaking of the foundations in New Testament scholarship. Of course this affects only those churches for whom the university professor is the main locus of authority in Hermeneutics, and a large part of the Christian Church may not even detect the post-Bultmannist tremors even in a sensitive theological seismograph. But some who are closer to the quake feel that something is happening to their foundations and are asking us for help. We have therefore along with our Finality study also to launch a Hermeneutics study.

But the fourth is our major concern. History is no longer a national affair. Humanity is caught up in a common destiny, so obviously. We have to find the meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in a manner that relates to the whole of *humanum* and not merely to those who acknowledge the Lord and are incorporated into the Body of Christ.

these thoughts? It cannot mean forsaking one history that has no meaning, or only negative meaning, leaving one religion that has no truth for one that has nothing but truth. It is rather to be made aware of the one history that lies in and beyond all histories, the one universal history that underlies all particular and partial histories, even the history of the Christian Church, the one history that is the history of one person, God and man, one person, yet all persons as they come to live in him, Jesus Christ.

So, finally, it is worth saying a word about "fact" and the "consciousness of fact." History has always been "universal" for us who are Christian because God has always purposed his one purpose for the world. In varying ways men have discerned that universal purpose, sometimes as in Israel and the Church of Jesus Christ, through what we have come to call revelation; sometimes, as in this present age, as secular men and as secular societies, by the pressure of events forcing man to realize his interdependence upon other men. To live in a given factual situation is one thing; it may not make any difference to live in the same situation and know what it is and how it works. But this cannot be true of the fact of history if what Christians say is true, that the real substance of history is the story of Jesus Christ. For that makes of history a realm of personal relationships, not only in its inter-mundane events, but also in that area where the events of this world are related to the life of God who is Lord. To know him as the centre and the substance of all our human story is to have a new dynamic and a new hope, indeed a hope that is, as the New Testament assures us, "certain and sure." To speak of the finality of Jesus Christ in this age of Universal History, then, is to use the language of faith about matters of fact, which is but to confess that "facts" are not always what they seem, and that we who have put our trust in Christ look not only at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but also at the things which are unseen, which are eternal. And it is because in Him, Jesus Christ, that time and eternity, history and what lies beyond history, God and man have been made inextricably one, and that our eyes have seen him, and still hope to see him, that we can speak of him as the finality of our history.

Let us not bother too much about defining "universal history" except to pass on another remark of our general secretary, which has been further illuminated by Dr. Marsh :

In a sense history has always been universal. Is our age then the first in which there is a consciousness of the universality of history ? No, for that consciousness began to develop in the 18th century. Our age is an age of universal history in that the *consciousness* of participating in universal history has itself become universal.

That may be a slight exaggeration when it comes to the masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and even some supposedly educated people in Europe and America. But the point is clear enough.

Now the question that I propose to ask and suggest a partial answer is this : God is at work in history. We all accept that. But *what* is God doing ?

Here is the partial answer :

He is doing many things which we do not as yet understand. But one thing is clear. *God the Holy Trinity in our time is working in all things together (Rom. 8. 28), gradually but at a definitely stepped-up tempo, to bring about an enhancement of the scope of human freedom, human community and human tragedy, in order that man may grow into the fullness of the mature manhood (Eph. 4. 13) of Christ the God-Man,*

There is a further question : In what way does the Incarnate life of Jesus Christ affect the life and destiny of the whole of mankind, even those who are outside the community of faith ?

To me the latter is the more interesting question. But in this present paper, I limit myself to the first question.

God the Holy Trinity. We ought to be careful not to separate too sharply the Three Persons of the Triune God. We must resist the temptation to Christo-monism and to the assertion that the Holy Spirit alone is working outside the Church. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are working together.

Working in all things together. History is in a large measure the work of man. But man often works for his own personal, group or national interests, and not always for good. God who controls history takes the raw material of our decisions and actions and puts them together to work towards His over-all purposes for mankind.

Gradually, but at a definitely stepped-up tempo. History is outrunning our time-tables. The independence of the African nations, the sudden

We may even have to include the non-human elements of the world in our doctrine of the Incarnation, since science and technology have revolutionized our relationship to the physical world.

As Dr. Visser 't Hooft says: "Post-Reformation Christianity has lacked the universal dimension. It has not developed a theology of *humanitate* and left it to the philosophers to think in terms of mankind. . . We need to work out a Christocentric universalism."

To put it rather bluntly, the question we need to ask is: "Is the rest of mankind merely the object of evangelism and service, or does God have a greater purpose for the whole of mankind, including the Church?" If we answer yes, we have to go further, and indicate some ways in which to state this purpose of God for the whole of humanity.

These four major concerns of ours have all been loaded into our theme, and it is obvious that we would not expect to explore all these areas here in Paris. What I do attempt is simply to sharpen the theme to one of its many foci and suggest a partial answer to the question I have raised above.

A word then about the definition of our theme itself. Some of us think "finality" is a rich enough word. Others among us are not so sure, particularly those who have no parallel word in their own language which has the same richness. I myself have only a vague awareness of what is meant by the word. And so there is little I can do to clarify the theological meaning of the expression except to say that when I use the word, I am thinking of the Sanskrit "*Paramata*" or *Paramya* of Christ. That may not be of much use to you, but in case you do not have the time to look up an English dictionary, here are a few dictionary meanings for the words *finality* and *final*.

Finality = the state of being final. In philosophy, the doctrine that nothing exists or was made except for a determinate end.

Final = Pertaining to the end or conclusion; last; ultimate; conclusive; decisive; respecting a purpose or ultimate end in view.

You see the word is rich and every meaning of the adjective is applicable to Christ. So we will have to keep all that in mind when we use the phrase.

Perhaps the word has a haughty ring to it, and non-Christian especially in our little parochial Asian world will call us arrogant and conceited for using such a phrase. Then perhaps that is what we are — arrogant and conceited — and we shouldn't resent being called by our name.

freedom released forces whose mushrooming and fall-out have begun to envelop the whole world.

As Jacob Burkhard puts it admirably :

In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness — that which was turned within as that which was turned without — lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation — only through some general category¹.

But in this very process of discovering himself as an individual as over against other individuals, there is alienation both from the neighbour, and from nature. And the uncomfortableness of this alienation has filled western man with doubt and anxiety, and has ever since his liberation been driving him once again to new submissions to authority, new identifications with mass movements, new urges to compulsive and often irrational activism.

While the Reformation brought freedom, it has not been able to train man for the burden of freedom — that which we too lightly call responsibility. This training of man is the crying need of the day which God is imposing on us. We cannot afford merely to develop a few super-men who are able to handle their freedom with responsibility while the others meekly accept their authority and surrender both their freedom and their responsibility. We need to develop the freedom of the totality of the human race.

So while we need to continue our fight for “the rights of man,” for the freedoms of speech, of worship, of minorities, of association, of conscience and of government, we have to expand the scope of our quest to reach two different realms of freedom as well.

The first realm still deals with the freedom of the individual — namely freedom from *internal* constraints. But at the very point where the internal bondage breaks, the kingdom breaks in and community begins to emerge. This is not simply a question of believing in Jesus Christ, for it was precisely to the *believing* Jews that Jesus spoke His momentous words on Truth and Freedom :

¹ *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 1921, p. 129, quoted by ERICH FROMM, *The Fear of Freedom*, Routledge, 1960, p. 36.

advances in space research, and the breaking down of confessional and national barriers in the Church and in Western Europe have all caught us by surprise. We should be on the alert with eager expectation and yet with great patience to watch for His clandestine coming into the life of mankind.

Human freedom

The question of freedom has often been posed in western theology in the categories of Free-will and Predestination. Augustine started the debate in his *De Civitate Dei*, but nearer to the end of his life retracted his main position against free-will, a fact almost ignored by medieval and post-Reformation Theology. (See *Retractations* I: xxiii.)

But the issue is hardly one of predestination and freewill. The nature of freedom itself has to be explored. Freedom has been sub-divided in many ways by many thinkers. But most of them make two assumptions which seem to me to be untenable when we speak of Christian freedom. First, most of the writers on freedom are speaking primarily of a freedom of choice; and secondly they usually speak of freedom as individual freedom.

We need to see freedom as essential to the nature of God Himself, and reflected in humanity as Image of God in the form of a seminal potentiality. When we speak of God's omnipotence, we are actually speaking of God's absolute freedom. Freedom is more than merely the possibility of choice, but truly the possibility of realization, of achievement.

Let me try to speak simple everyday language here. Am I free to be in India physically in the next five minutes? That of course is not a question of choice, but of power, of forces that prevent me from fulfilling what I desire, of agencies that I lack. God is free in that by the sheer act of willing He realizes His purposes. His freedom is commensurate with His power. And when we speak of human freedom from a Christian standpoint we are not speaking of free-will as over against predestination, nor are we thinking of the freedom of choice of the individual.

The Reformation set men free from the shackles of traditional authority in the medieval European world. But this was basically an individual freedom, a freedom which later paved the way for free enterprise, capitalism and the missionary and sectarian revolts against the organized Protestant Churches. The Reformation and its individualist Gospel of

Paul A. W.

Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue to abide in my *logos*, you shall be truly my disciples, thus know the truth and the truth shall liberate you." (St. John 8. 31-32.)

The inner constraints are manifold and we only catalogue a select list : anxiety, guilt, fear of death, fear of being different, fear of losing approval and love, fear to upset established patterns in which we find our security, the compulsive drives of passion and hatred, envy and slander, bitterness and gossip, fear of exposure, fear of loss of power and so on. Here is the tremendous need of the world — western or eastern, Christian or non-Christian, educated or uneducated. And the break-through in this area of freedom must come from the community of love, the Church, where "for freedom Christ has set us free." This is a question of a genuine Christian community of faith and forgiveness, of mutual acceptance and common worship and service. From the Church this freedom must spread to the world, just as the concept of service has broken loose from the Church and is spreading into the unbelieving world. There is so much to say here, but one can only find time to indicate the area.

The second realm is one which is already receiving world-wide attention. This is not freedom from, but freedom for. This is a question of considerable urgency especially in those nations which have recently become free from the colonial bondage. There remains the whole question of economic colonialism and I think, also intellectual and spiritual colonialism, which are highly loaded phrases likely to alienate the sympathy of many among you. But the positive aspect of the freedom of the new nations to be themselves can hardly be separated from these aspects of western domination. To find their own identity — it is for this that the nations are striving. Emancipation is the first stage — from external domination of any kind ; also from the uncritical enslavement to the past. But the second stage is the slower and more laborious process of growing into full nationhood in a community of nations, where no one dominates and all are free to be members in a relationship of mutuality to other nations, in an atmosphere of acceptance, forgiveness and cooperation. The point is to be discussed under the heading of community, but the need to be free to be oneself as a nation belongs to the realm of freedom. It raises a whole series of questions : economic and technological development, the development of a pluralistic but harmonious culture within each national unit which determines the fundamental aspect of the nation's personality, the changes and adapta-

tions that this calls for in the areas of education, pattern of government, and social systems.

To summarize the answer in the area of freedom, God has enhanced the scope of freedom for individual and social entities within the world-wide human society. He is working to face us with new freedoms to be won, and the Church should be there to work with men outside in the common quest of freedom — which is the power to be one's own self in relation to other selves, and to grow by the mastery of power and by its utilization for good ends.

Human community

God has broken down many fences in our time, to throw us together. The communications media, economic interdependence of nations, the spread of education to the masses and the levelling influence of a contagious urban-technological culture have brought us together across many national, racial and class barriers.

The United Nations Organization and its allied agencies, in spite of their many set-backs and failures, have created the nucleus of a total human organization on a world-wide basis, something completely new in the known history of the world.

Just as God has been and is increasing the scope of human freedom in its internal and external aspects, so also He is now working to increase the scope of human community. The spontaneous communities of the middle ages in Europe as well as in other parts of the world were after all parochial communities. They have broken down. The urban-technological culture has demolished the old securities and has thrown us together into the Lonely Crowd. It is there that we have to rediscover community, and that not by going back to an agrarian-rural economy. God has placed us in front of a problem which frustrates us by its very magnitude. Here again God works in history to place a challenge before man which he cannot solve even in part without truly developing and growing together in the very process of finding and executing that solution.

It may be possible for us at this point to seek many easy solutions — (1) to retreat into oneself and find a purely personal adjustment to the loneliness and meaninglessness of life — what some delight to call “acceptance of absurdity and living with it,” or (2) to escape into pietism and find a solution in pure “inner spiritual development” or (3) to escape into the mass and drown the groan of inner loneliness by joining the

whirl of social or political activity, or again (4) to seek a meaningful active vocation of service in which one almost uses other people as a means of giving significance to one's own life.

But none of these can create community — not even the fourth alternative which is most attractive to us as Christians. Some way has to be found at the foundational levels of human association — in the family, in the school, in the local community, in the local church, in the factory and so on — to break down the walls that divide man from fellow-man. The forgiving, accepting, sustaining, secure love of God must become so richly and deeply a matter of personal and direct experience to each individual that he is enabled to face himself as he is and open himself to others. This is the grass-roots level of community — also the grass-root level of genuine ecumenism. Ecumenism does not simply require that the local Methodist and Lutheran congregations merge into one congregation, or are in a relationship of mutuality to each other. The unity of the Church does not become a full reality until at the inter-personal level there is forgiveness and openness and mutual acceptance. This is something which has more meaning for the ordinary Christian than the merger of the denominations.

I am not suggesting that we should not do anything to bring the churches together until we have dealt with the inter-personal problems at the level of "where two or three are gathered together." My suggestion rather is that the small group community of openness in love and concern, in common worship and common service is a neglected area of our ecumenical work. The neglect of this level is sure to leave an enormous gap in the full manifestation of the reality of Christ's unity, even when the problem has been solved at other levels. This is the sort of thing which cannot be tackled by the Welfare State, and at present the Church is in a better position to start a contagion of openness than any other agency that God has in the world.

But we must at the same time keep in mind the genuinely ecumenical dimensions of the problem. If the whole *oikoumene* has to be involved in the new human community towards which God is beckoning us, we cannot be satisfied with merely working at the small inter-personal level. The power structures have to be reconciled to each other too. And here God does place before us several concerns.

(a) *The West and the East*. I need not elaborate this area of concern, except to say that our faith must be equal to the risks involved in taking bold action at this point. Disarmament takes courage and faith and

openness. Fear of the other still hiding his true intentions and his murderous weapons is inducing both sides to hide their hearts from each other. A break-through is necessary here. The charge of "Fellow-travelling" or in more modern lingo, of being a "Com-symp"¹ is a frightening and tyrannical force in many parts of the world today, disrupting community both at a world-wide and at national and domestic levels. The Christian faith should be able to deliver us from our bondage to this tyranny.

Christ was and is the Master Fellow-traveller and we cannot afford to be less. He was and is the "all-symp," and we have to share in his universal sympathy. The World Council of Churches itself is hamstrung in its approach to Christians in the socialist countries by the fear of being tarred and lampooned as "com-symp," in fact the smear campaign has already been going on for some time. Neither can we afford to neglect one-fourth of humanity in our human community by keeping People's China out of the United Nations. The East has also to learn to trust the West, and not to condemn it wholesale.

(b) *The West and the Rest*. I am not always sure that we can blame God for taking the West into the rest of the world. Imagine the year 1450. Europe is a pretty isolated place, ignorant of the rest of the world. And then suddenly it explodes. Discovery of America, discovery of route around the Cape of Good Hope, the division of the world between Portugal and Spain as areas of colonization, the wars in Europe which expand into European world colonialism lasting until about 15 years ago. I know some of my friends see God's hand in all this; but I see also the wrath of men praising God.

But can we think that we have come to the end of Western dominance in the world today now that political colonialism is practically liquidated? The true answer is no. And we cannot have a world-wide human community so long as that dominance lasts. Western man has slowly acquired the spirit of domination through the last 400 years. It will take him many generations to get rid of it. So he has a special responsibility to be careful; for even when he thinks he is serving, he may actually be dominating. I will say no more, for it is a very sore subject.

We have a need to think of how the European Economic Community, the African regional federations, the Commonwealth and other regional or selective human communities and open conversations among the

¹ Communist sympathizer.

thinkers of all the great religions of the world can contribute to the final emergence of a genuinely world-wide community.

Human tragedy

Suffering is the constant companion of human existence. Obviously it is hard to measure. My own general impression, however, is that its scope has increased in our time. The up-rootedness of human life is becoming more universal today than it ever was. Wars are more global in scope today. The catastrophic possibility of the dissolution of the whole planet with all life in it also has become frighteningly real in our time. In spite of our greatly increased humanitarian activities, the impressive progress in medicine and our more comprehensive care for the disabled and aged, we still have such vast proportions of human suffering to conquer yet.

It takes more optimism than facts allow to hope that the world without war and without want which we hope to achieve in a foreseeable future, would also deal with all the other aspects of suffering and that we would thus come into a golden age of no suffering at all.

What then is God doing in our world by increasing the scope of suffering and tragedy in our world? The agony of the burden of freedom itself is a major cause of suffering. Our very efforts to relieve suffering does entail voluntarily accepted suffering. Our alienation from neighbour and nature also causes intense suffering. What is God calling us to do in the midst of this suffering? Of course there is the imperative that springs directly out of the love of God, not only to relieve suffering, but also to share the suffering of men. But I wish here to speak of an other aspect of suffering to which God is calling us. I will call this the "tragic mode of learning."

Learning is of the essence of human growth. And God's purpose is that the whole of mankind may grow into the mature manhood of Christ. That is why education is such an important concern to us. But do we learn? I suppose all experience is learning in a sense. But it may be fruitful to distinguish between the comic mode of learning and the tragic mode of learning.

Eric Bentley in his discussion of George Bernard Shaw's Comedies ¹ makes the interesting point that the method of comedy is clarification

¹ *The Playwright as Thinker*, New York, 1946.

of truth through the ironic exposure of pretentious, false or hollow ideas. Comedy as distinct from farce uses words to analyse truth. The inspired verbal commentary and dialectic which dissects and exposes falsehood, however, asks for no identification of the onlooker of the drama with the agents in it. We can watch it in detachment and learn without pain.

Tragedy on the other hand has its power in the learning that comes to the actors through suffering, and to the onlooker through participation in the suffering of the actors. The essence of tragedy, I am told, is to affirm the dignity and significance of man in a world of suffering¹. This dignity is reflected in man's choice and his responsibility for the consequences of the choice. But it is not the individual man who chooses, in isolation from others. His choice and action are affected by other men and other forces, which have power over him. There are limitations on the agent's power, within himself, in his "boundness" to others and in the forces of nature. And the function of tragedy is not to offer a solution to the problem of human limitation and suffering but to provide a *clarification* of the situation.

The tragedy, when it is authentic drama, does not pose the issues of good and evil in black and white terms. The hero and the villain have both good and evil mixed in them in varying proportions. Of course there are the demonic forces, like Mephistopheles, the witches, Iago, etc. Their demand is for the soul of man, for the surrender of basic humanity. But the triumph of the tragedy is not in the destruction of evil, but in the dignified refusal to surrender one's basic identity.

As Hegel so brilliantly pointed out, the tragic struggle is not between good and evil but between differing principles of right. It is unfair to oversimplify this as choosing the lesser evil. The tragic probe is always to clarify the conflict in real human life between rival principles of right, and to unveil the hard and by no means clear nature of the decisions we have to make in life.

Our scientific and academic approach to knowledge, discursive and analytical, detached in general, belongs to the comic pattern of learning and is an essential component of learning for maturity.

But the tragic mode of learning is the key to Christian education. One is frightfully worried about the great desire to educate the Church

¹ *The Complete Greek Drama*, Oates & Neill (ed.), New York, 1938, Vol. I. Intro., *passim*.

through an unending stream of books, periodicals and mimeographed sheets, by the virtuoso or amateurish performances of preachers for 20 minutes a week, taking advantage of the time when the congregation puts on its most civil manner, and by those who think that including or excluding a "subject" called religious instruction in the school curriculum and the shape of that curriculum are the important keys to Christian education.

If we are to serve the Church and the world which in some ways is more mature, we have to cut through the moralistic over-simplification of issues and teach our people to learn by the tragic method, by the method of identification and involvement, of suffering with and for the world, in order that we may learn wisdom. The moral uprootedness of our time is again God working to destroy our over-simplified concepts of good and evil. As Michael Polanyi so convincingly asserts, our age is not an amoral age. It is rather an over-moralistic age. We are very much concerned about moral issues, the burning questions of value, but we have found no acceptable system. Youth is deeply interested in morality even when it rejects the conventional form of it.

To evolve an ethic of suffering love, to embody it and thereby manifest God to the world — this is the great goal of Christian education. For this it must use the tragic mode of learning, not merely the comic. By enhancing the scope of tragedy in our time, God is forcing us to restructure our ethical vision. Our work of service must grow into a labour of suffering love. In our time we have returned to a stoic conception of suffering: suffering is to be relieved, but without ourselves sharing in it, our own suffering is to be heroically borne alone, without showing any of it to others. But suffering is the raw material out of which true faith and love can be built, and there needs to be discovered a more Christian attitude towards suffering. In this we shall ourselves grow closer to the mature manhood of Christ, but we will have to grow with the whole of mankind.

* * *

I have intentionally refrained from discussing the theological aspect of the question: "How does the Incarnate life of Jesus Christ affect the life of unbaptized man in the world?" Limitations of time prevent me from doing it here. But we must get an image of humanity past, present and future as a single unit, the Great Adam, flowing through time, and of the presence of the Incarnate Christ in this Adam as a continuing

phenomenon affecting the life of *humanum* in perceptible and imperceptible ways.

The Lordship of Christ should not be misunderstood in this connection as an arbitrary authority over the world. Our Lord's words to Pilate, the representative of the Roman Empire are significant: "My Kingship is not of this world; if my Kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews." (John 18. 36.) It is neither the law-and-order Kingship nor the welfare state kingship. It is the kingship of suffering love. It is the kingship that lays down its life for the world. And we are kings too, but by participation in his kingship of suffering love.

The Finality of Christ in the age of Universal History is a strange finality — the finality of the Cross and Resurrection — of life through death.

* * *

Will the unbaptized man be saved? God wills that all men be saved. Christ wills that all men be saved. And He wills as He ought to will. And His will is: "When the hour of destiny strikes, to gather together into one the whole Universe in Him." (Eph. 1. 10.) Can that will be thwarted? No, for His will is commensurate with His power. But *how* is His will to be fulfilled? That is a comic question. Our task is to learn the answer slowly by the tragic method, by laying down our lives for the life of the world.

N A T U R E

The English word Nature, (Latin natura, Greek phusis) is used in at least three senses: (1) the constitutive nature of an entity, (e.g., "a wolf is by nature cruel") (2) natural phenomena untouched by humans; (e.g. "nature and culture are two distinct but related realms"); and (3) the whole of reality, (e.g., "nature has endowed man with a very complex brain structure".) The New Testament uses the word often in the first sense ("by nature Jews"- Gal 2:15; "by nature children of wrath", Eph 2:3, "branches according to nature", Rom 11:21,24.) i.e. as the structure and constitution with which someone or something is born (see also James 3:6,7; Pet 1:14, I Cor 11:14; Gal 4:8). But there is no Hebrew equivalent for this Greek word phusis.

The second and third senses of phusis are not in the New Testament, or Old Testament, except in the Hellenistic apocryphal IV Maccabes 5:5-8, (LXX) where it is the pagan Antiochus Epiphanes, who recommends swine's flesh to Eleazar the High Priest as a gracious "gift of nature" and says it is wrong to reject "nature's favours".

Etienne Gilson thinks with Malebranche that "nature is par excellence an anti-Christian idea, a remnant from pagan philosophy which has been accepted by imprudent theologians".

Aristotle and the Stoics used the word physis to denote more or less the whole universe with all its creative and regulative powers as a self-existent and self-sustaining whole.

In current usage one finds both the inclusive and the exclusive senses of the word 'nature', i.e. including humanity or excluding it. Nature has often been opposed to culture or civilization, especially since Rousseau. The 13th meaning of the word nature as given by the Oxford English Dictionary (1908 edn) is "the material world, or its collective objects and phenomena, especially those with which man is most directly in contact; frequently, the features and products of the earth itself, as contrasted with those of human civilization".

Theologians often speak of a process of 'historicisation of Nature' in Israel (see F & O Study Paper No. 50 of 1968) when the three 'nature-feasts' of unleavened bread, first-fruits and booths (Exodus 23:14-17, Deut 16:1-17) were related to acts of God in history. But the Hebrew Old Testament does not make the distinction between nature and history, for neither of which concepts the Hebrew language has words. The great redemptive act of the Exodus was as much an event in 'history' as in 'nature' (e.g. the burning bush, the ten plagues, the drying up of the sea, the land flowing with milk and honey, the thunder and lightning at the appearance of Yahweh).

The second creation story is very anxious to affirm that the heavens and the earth also have a genesis or birth (toledoth ha-shamayim w-ha-erets, Gen 2:4ff), and that they were created by Yahweh. The Old Testament uses the verb 'create' (parah), and shies away from the noun-form 'creation'. (Syriac berithah has no O.T. equivalent)

The dichotomy between Nature on the one hand and many other entities on the other, like Grace, Supernature, History, Man, Culture and so on seem peculiar to the western tradition. The 9th century European Christian conception of natura included God. John Scouts Eriugena (Ca 810 - Ca 877) gave the four-fold classification of nature: (1) natura creans et non creata or nature, creating and not created, i.e. God; (2) natura creata et creans, or nature created and creating, i.e. the Platonic kosmos noetos or world of archetypal or universal ideas generating particular existents;; (3) natura creata et non creans, or nature created and not creating, in which category Eriugena puts humanity which cannot create ex nihilo, and (4) natura non creata et non creans, i.e. nature uncreated and not creating, a medieval conception of the final apokatastasis or restoration when all creativity will stop in a static perfection wherein God is all in all.

But medieval thought never conceived a 'natural order' which was independent of the 'supernatural order'. 'Nature' in our sense was a dynamic, contingent, caused entity, but with its own 'natural laws'. God was not only not subject to these 'natural laws' but could interfere with them and annul them when needed, e.g. in the miracles. God is not bound by nature; nature is bound by God. God can also unbind the laws of nature.

This law-bound nature is active. Nature is an agent. All that happens in the world is caused exclusively by three agents: God, Nature and Humanity. Everything is an act of God, an act of nature or an act of man. When God acts it is a supernatural act, as distinguished from the last two.

This way of thinking was strange to the Eastern Fathers. They spoke about acting according to nature or contrary to nature (kata phusin or para phusin) but they almost never spoke about something hyperphysikos or supernatural except in a poetic sense.

For the Eastern Fathers, as for the Biblical witness, the act of creation is the opening phase of God's redeeming work. Both the book of Genesis and the Gospel of St. John begin with an account of this opening phase. In the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah we find that the framework of God's redeeming

activity in his original act of creation (Is 40:21ff; 42:5ff; 44:24ff; 45:12ff; 51:9ff etc). Part of God's redeeming act is the restoring of creation (Is 41:17-20)

In the debate between the inclusive versus exclusive view of 'nature', Christians have to be careful not to fall into the trap of including just two entities - namely humanity and nature. The package has always three 'poles' - God, humanity and the world. Neither the second nor the third could exist apart from or independently of the first.

It is important to note here the fundamental tension between certain Eastern religions on the one hand and the west Asian tradition of semitic religions. The latter prefer to put an almost unbridgeable gap between the world and the transcendent God. Hinduism and Taoism generally have the same ethos as of Stoicism in the west, where the world is God and God is world. Only Buddhism steers clear of this semitic-South-Asian debate.

By refusing to raise the question of God altogether, and by positing the world and humanity as two inter-related and inter-acting entities, everything being dependent on everything else and everything in a process of dynamic change, the Buddhist doctrines of causality and dependent origination of phenomena at least avoid the cleavage of transcendence and keeps everything together.

In the Indian tradition, the earliest strand, Samkhya is dualistic. Prakrti or nature is contrasted with Purusha or person. This is a non-inclusive view of nature, seeing it as devoid of its own consciousness or purpose, composed of various qualities (gunas) in mutual interaction. In opposition to this Sankara developed the monistic view in which what we call nature, including humanity, is Brahman or the Absolute Itself, wrongly perceived as separate from the Absolute. In the Chinese tradition of Tao, the two opposing but complementary principles of Yin and Yang together constitute all reality, including God, world and humanity.

The Christian teaching prefers the word ktisis (creation) to phusis (nature) to refer to the whole world. The three classical passages in the N.T. are John 1:1-18, Col 1:15-20, and Hebrews 11:3. The N.T., in speaking of the created order, always insists that it is held together in and by the second person of the Trinity, without whom it would be nothing. The Biblical tradition not only insists that the created order has its beginning in God, but also affirms that without God the world has neither present nor future. The Eastern Fathers of the Church continued this tradition. The classical patristic writing is St.Basil's nine homilies on the Six Days of Creation (Hexaemeron). Most of the key doctrines whose origin is wrongly attributed to St.Augustine in the Western tradition can be found

in St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa two generations earlier. The world does not begin in time, but in God's will and word (Hexameron: hom I: 5ff). The six days of creation are not 24-hour days (caused by the Sun created only on the fourth day) but long epochs. There is no "three-storey universe" as in Bultmann's caricature of patristic teaching. The created order is unfinished, dynamic, moving towards its fulfilment. Heaven is not a place, but an order of many dimensioned reality closed to our senses.

Gregory of Nyssa (ca 330 to ca 395 A.D.) was more philosophical in his discussion of the created order. Spatio-temporal extension and incessant change are the characteristics of the created as distinct from the Creator. There is both continuity by participation (metousia) and discontinuity by transcendence or standing apart, extension (diastema) between God and World. The created order is a space-time process or rather a procession, orderly and sequential, journeying through life from something to something. Life is an important aspect of that procession from origin to perfection; it is through the evolution of life that the procession moves forward. Human activity is the key for progress. Human aspiration for the greater good, and humanity's free creativity of the good are the factors that make the world meaningful. (For documentation and further discussion see P.Gregorios, Cosmic Man, The Divine Presence, N.Y. Paragon 1987

also The Human Presence, N.Y. Amity, 1987)

In the Byzantine tradition, St. Maxinus the Confessor (580-662) uses the word 'nature' only in our first sense, i.e. the constitutive nature of a group or class of entities. For 'nature' in the inclusive sense he uses ktisis or 'creation'. Its original unity comes by virtue of its common origin both in non-being and in the creative energy of the logos which holds it together. It has also a destined or eschatological unity, achieved by Jesus Christ, God-Man, body-soul, who took his body in the ascension to the heavens or eternal realms. Creation is thus inseparable from redemption.

In modern science, 'nature' was often thought of as an objectively existing entity, independent of the Creator and the observing human mind. Today the objective existence of a world can no longer be assumed in science. The world of phenomena can be seen as something emerging in human consciousness and experience, known to be ultimately composed of energy-waves operating both in the mind and in the world.

Science persists in the hope that these phenomena can be explained without reference to any Creator outside of it. In science itself there is no basis for the concept of something called 'nature' independent of God and humanity.

The concept of 'nature' as a generic term for reality, whether inclusive or exclusive of humanity, is thus mis-leading. Christians know only a dynamic created order with a beginning (arche) and a destiny (telos) as well as a course or path to be traversed from beginning to fulfilment. This created order, which comes out of non-being, has the creative word of God (logos theou) as its original constitutive power and its present sustaining force. Its fulfilled unity is eschatological, to come at the end. This unity is achieved by the God-Man, body-soul Jesus Christ who united in himself all things and reconciles them to God as a single offering.

Humanity
Man, Nature and God - three realities or one?

Is the universe a unified single system, or is it a manifold, wherein man, other animals and plants, and inanimate nature are all different systems?

Human knowledge, in its various disciplines, has always been an attempt to relate the parts of the universe to each other. Even myth and ritual are such attempts. In modern science there is a desire to unify all knowledge through a single field theory which brings all the levels and dimensions of ~~observed~~ ^{observed} ~~observed~~ reality into its scope. Similarly there is an attempt also to understand all reality in terms of the laws of one discipline - say physics or chemistry. In Marxism there is a similar attempt to unify all reality through the three Laws of Dialectics.

The fact that none of these efforts have fully succeeded in unifying all reality, may mean either that our theories are deficient, or that we do not have as yet sufficient data to bring everything together under one unitary conception, or again that the universe is not really united. Whichever may be the case, neither ~~field~~ ^{an over-all scientific} theory nor ^a ~~reductionist~~ ^{approach} would be able adequately to explain the human reality in all its complexity. It is by placing the knower somehow outside the object of knowledge that physical science in the past has sought to understand the universe objectively. A ~~field~~ theory which unifies reality leaving out the human being and his complex aspirations, cannot be the last word in human knowledge. Would such a field theory be able to explain human history and human hope? Christians would add - would such a field theory take into account the reality of God, or would he still remain an unnecessary hypothesis in the Laplacian sense?

The fact of the matter is that the unifying conception of the universe is always a human act of creativity, an act which invariably involves ^{more than mere objective knowledge of reality} ~~outside~~ ^{outside} of us. Such a unifying vision of the created order is provided usually by religious world views or secular philosophical systems.

Whether it is a religious or a secular view man comes into it as more than a subject standing apart from the objective world. The evolutionary hypothesis sees man as emerging from the material world in process, relating himself to it not only in terms of origin, but also as resuming

within himself aspects of the world - material, vegetative and animal. Even a philosophical view such as Husserl's Phenomenology which starts by bracketing out the objective world, finds the world as contained in his consciousness. ~~Nuclear~~ Physics is coming to the conclusion that the observer is an integral part of the reality that he observes. The observer is also participator.

The separation between subject and object which was once the essence of the scientific enterprise seems useful only at macro levels of observation. The universe does not consist of ~~distinct~~ ^{distinctly discernible} objects spread out in time; it turns ^{out} to be a pattern of ~~inter~~ connected events of which man himself is an integral part as he observes, understands and changes the world.

There is also a commonsense level at which we can understand man's integral relation to the universe. The following aspects seem to be obvious:

- a. Man was produced in the course of creation or evolution from the elements of the material world. As the New Testament puts it "The first man is from the earth, earthly" (I Cor. 15:47).
- b. Man ^{has} recapitulates in himself material ^{elements} ~~elements~~, vegetative ~~elements~~ and animal ^{aspects} ~~elements~~. He shares with the rest of creation a body in time-space which obeys the same laws ^(with some possible qualifications) as all the other levels of earthly existence.
- c. Man is dependent on the elements of the external world without which he cannot live; the food he eats, the air he breathes, the sun on which the biosphere depends for its energy supply, the delicate eco-balance on our planet so essential for sustaining life - all these are integral elements of his being as man. Without matter and the life of plants and animals, there is no human existence.
- d. Man is dependent on work for his sustenance, which is a way of interacting with the external world. The health of his body and mind require this interaction with the material world.

This integral relation between man and nature has often been partially overlooked in the attempt to understand nature (a) as object and (b) as the creation minus man. Only a unitary vision of man as an integral part of

creation can be faithful to the reality we know. To think of the non-human world as something which is out there, to be an object of our scientific knowledge and technical manipulation, is not only wrong, but has disastrous consequences as the ecological crisis is already showing. Man is part of the eco-system, and his actions by their impact on that system, can be self-destructive if such actions do not have regard for the system itself.

But are man and nature the only two realities that we need to take into account in their inter-relation?[?] Can we understand the man-nature relationship without reference to anything outside it? Secular thought so believes. Modern science and technology have developed in a secular atmosphere where only man and nature were taken into account. The successes of science and technology in explaining and changing the world have reinforced the secular philosophy which believes that the universe can be explained in terms of itself without reference to a creator (the 'unnecessary hypothesis' of Laplace).

The attempts of intellectually respectable philosophers and theologians to make God a necessary hypothesis have ensured only a deus ex machina, a God outside the machine of the mechanistically understood universe. The question: "Why is there a universe at all?" has been dismissed as unanswerable and therefore as irrelevant. Philosophically respectable interpretations ascribing the source of Creation and creativity to a Creator God (e.g. Whitehead), despite the philosophers' adequate knowledge of science, have generally received a bad press. Theology itself has been tempted to abandon the 'unnecessary hypothesis' of a Creator God, and has proceeded to give 'secular' interpretations of the Christian gospel. The 'observable' realities of man and nature are affirmed to be the only two realities that exist, since they are the only ones to which we can point.

Why does Christian theology resort to such extreme measures, contradicting its own nature as theology, the reasoned discourse about God? We suggest that theology itself is to blame in large measure. Not only by its often standing in the way of scientific progress, but also by failing to incorporate adequately the knowledge gained by science into its deliverances about the nature of reality, and by conceding to science an autonomy which is absolute and a monopoly on knowledge which few scientists would claim today. Perhaps also by overemphasis on the transcendence of God in an almost spatial way,

dissociating God from the life of man (who is regarded as totally sinful and therefore totally alienated from God), and by dissociating salvation history (Heilsgeschichte) from the history of man and nature.

Today Christian theology seeks to overcome these errors of the past. The Christian vision of God attempts to bring all reality together in inter-relationship, without blurring the distinctions. God is no longer seen as a reality 'outside of' or apart from the reality of man and nature. Man and nature can exist only in God. They cannot be outside God for God has no outside. Only finite entities, beings with boundaries, can have an outside. Outside God there is only nothing. All that exists, whether man or nature, exist only in contingent dependence upon God, whose loving will sustains them in existence. God, man and nature are thus seen not as three separate realities, but as one reality - the fundamental reality of God upon whom all other reality depends and from whom created reality is derived.

This is not to blur any of the distinctions, as has been said. The tensions remain, between God's transcendence and His involvement in the creation, between God's 'is-ness' which is self-derived and sui genesis and the is-ness of created existents, between divine creativity which brings all existents into being and sustains them in existence and the creativity of man which depends upon God's creativity and can only shape and give form to what is given.

There is a further problem in this unitary vision of God, man and cosmos - the problem of sin and alienation. There is now no harmonious unity between the three. The ^{Personal story narrative} myth of the Fall refers to a rupture in creation, a revolt of man against God, of nature against man. The ecological crisis can be seen also as a pointer to this unity yet to be achieved. But are not the two revolts inter-related, and can one be solved apart from the other? Alienation exists, from the human perspective, at many levels - man from God, man from man, man from nature, and even man from his own true being. The overcoming of this alienation is the drama of creation, fall and redemption, in which the present ecological crisis constitutes one scene. In Christ the alienation is overcome, but the victory is yet to be consummated.

The drama itself goes on, and will probably go on beyond the overcoming of the crisis of ecology and the crisis of human justice. We of the present generation must play our God-given role in the present scene of which the crisis of justice and the crisis of ecology are the two main elements.

God, man and nature - their unity affirmed by faith is also the object of the Christian hope. Hope realized is no longer hope. Hope, however, moves us on.

Abstract of Fr Paul Verghese's Paper

1. Certain schools of contemporary Protestant Christology reveal an inner contradiction precisely because they fail or refuse to relate the divinity and humanity of Christ in an adequate manner, either through not doing justice to the divine hypostasis of the logos who provides the true identity of the man Jesus or through a kerygmatic docetism which seeks to dissociate the Christ of faith from the Jesus of history.

2. The intellectual weakness of these approaches is being revealed within these liberal Protestant Christological schools. They may appear to be very relevant to a contemporary world, but this appearance of relevance is at the cost of ignoring the fact of the divine hypostasis in traditional Christology. Relevance at the expense of truth becomes irrelevant.

3. I submit that both the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation are the two central mysteries of the Christian faith, and are mysteries precisely because they elude our conceptual grasp. In this sense Chalcedon does not resolve the Christological problem any more than the earlier tradition was able to, or even as much as Severus of Antioch

was able to do later. The two mysteries may have been stated by our fathers in terminology that has become archaic, but we have to hold to these early formulae and try to understand them in the sense in which the Fathers intended them. It is a betrayal of the Christian faith to try to resolve them in terms which deny one of the two terms which have to be held in tension ~~with each have to be held in tension~~ with each other within the paradox. Secular Christologies too easily resolve the paradox by ignoring the trans-spatio-temporal aspect.

4. In view of this essentially trans-logical structure of the two central mysteries, any attempt to resolve them in terms of conceptual formulae is bound to fail. The only legitimate way to adhere ^{to} the truth of God in Christ is through the Eucharist, which is itself a trans-temporal event, and makes possible the transcendence of space and time in history. A non-Eucharistic Christology is dangerously misleading, for it is in the Eucharist that we experience both the Incarnation and the meeting with the Holy Trinity, and not in our Christological formulations.

5. The intellectual-ethical orientation of western ~~Christel~~ Christianity needs therefore the corrective of a Eucharistic orientation to "doctrine" ^{but} and the Eucharistic orientation of the Eastern tradition if it is unrelated to the intellectual-ethical can be just as dangerously mis-leading.

6. If the two-natures Christology of Chalcedon is understood in an asymmetrical sense, it can be regarded as faithful to the tradition of the church. But it still fails to do justice to the mystery of the unity of the person of Christ; it affirms unity primarily at the level of the hypostasis, at which level there is after all only one hypostasis and therefore no question of disunity. The question of unity becomes crucial at the level of the natures, for we do not think in terms of a divine hypostasis and a human hypostasis coming together any way. Unity has to be affirmed at the level of nature for we do talk of divine nature and human nature, but not of divine hypostasis and human hypostasis. At that level the Chalcedonian formula insists on duality, qualified of course by two of the four adverbs. We insist that the unity is in the one hypostasis, as well as in the one united divine-human nature of that hypostasis. And if our own nature is to be made divine by participation, it is essential that the two natures become one (theosis)

7. The terminological problem has been ~~adduced~~ adduced by certain Greek scholars to insist that hypostasis and physis are interchangeable terms in St. Cyril, and that when he says one physis, he means one hypostasis. This has not been demonstrated and cannot be accepted. Cyril and Severus knew as much Greek as most Greeks and cannot be accused of not knowing the languages adequately.

8. We cannot get rid of this terminology without finding adequate substitutes in which to guard the mystery. This we have not yet been able to do.

The Nature of Metaphysics and Terminology

The first question has a double ~~methodological~~ ^{methodological} answer:
(a) metaphysical, (b) ~~terminological~~

We ~~are~~ ^{have been} living in an age characterized by its aversion to metaphysics and ontology, an aversion whose roots could be traced back to the failure of ^{new} European philosophy, especially ^{following the collapse} of German Idealism. The metaphysical extravagance of Hegel, Fichte and Schelling had only precipitated the reaction against what Kant had ^{already long before} taught to be impossible - the ^{effort} to know ultimate reality as it is. Hume and Comte had also made their contribution to the undermining of metaphysics. Comte especially made metaphysics unfashionable ^{intermediary} by calling it "primitive", ^{an} ~~stage~~ ^{stage} in the advance from the even more ~~primitive~~ ^{primitive} theological stage towards the stage of positive science.

Herbert Spencer had given expression to the view already in the last century that all thinking being only relating, thought cannot express more than mere relations. Bergson accused "substance metaphysics" of ^{implying} too inert and static a view of the world.

But all metaphysics is not substance metaphysics. Metaphysics is an attempt

to state our intuitions about certain ultimate aspects of reality in language which by nature is inadequate for the task. Not to state these intuitions at all may however mean that we lose even our ^{necessarily} inadequate grasp of that intuition.

Christology is a case in point. We cannot state who Christ is with any sense of finality. What we say we know we will have to revise when we see Him in His glory some day. But we do have, ^{Christian tradition,} some basic intuitions about Christ. Christological formulae are meant ~~really~~ primarily as vehicles for the preservation of these intuitions. They are also warnings about certain ways of understanding the ~~Reality~~ ^{which} Reality of Christ ~~in a manner that~~ could lead us astray.

The revolt against metaphysics has therefore to be taken seriously. For it is, in the language of Wittgenstein, a revolt against the misuse of language. If we make a Christological statement and presume that it is of the same order as saying "all There are some men who have two feet and two eyes", we would be misunderstanding the Christological formula. It is not a statement of fact derived a posteriori from experience or a priori from logical necessity. There is no falsification technique or verification

-4-

of a Christological statement.

If neither experience nor logical necessity is the basis on which we make ~~this~~ Christological statements, the only conceivable alternative in secular terms is that it is a poetic, a moral, or a historical statement. ~~There can be little doubt that the Christological Chalcedonian formula does not belong to the~~ But before we reject the idea that it is not a statement of fact or a statement of logical necessity, let us observe the form of the statement which begins:

"Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son-----" etc

It could be argued that the formula is a simple statement of fact - it ~~says~~ ^{implies} first that the holy fathers taught thus and also that following them those present at the Council ~~also~~ teach the same thing about ~~Jesus~~ ^{our Lord Jesus Christ}. In this sense it could be tested by the falsification technique at two points:

(a) Would it be true to say "not following the holy fathers"? Some of us would

answer "yes" to that question, and argue that one of the most important fathers - St. Basil, Alexander, whom the Council claims to follow, did not and would not say "in two natures". In that sense, if "not following the holy fathers" which is the negative of "following the holy fathers" is also true in a significant ~~some~~ measure, it follows that "following the holy fathers" is not true.

- 5 -

(b) Is it true to say: "we do not all with one accord teach men" etc? ~~Some~~ That depends very much on the meaning of the word "we". If it is used only to indicate the signatories of the document, it would be formally true to say that they do all teach the same thing, inasmuch as they have signed the document. The negative statement would not be true, for if they did not agree they would not have signed, one could argue. (Though we all know that signatures could often be the consequence of psychological or other pressures and not necessarily of substantial agreement). If the negative is proved to be false a priori (i.e. in so far as a statement says that its signatories agree to something it should be taken for granted that ~~they do not~~ ^{they do not} disagree), the positive may then be regarded as true.

But if "we" means the participants at the Council of Chalcedon, it is very clear that the negative is true, namely that many of them evidently and passionately disagreed with the "in two natures" formula. ~~and with the Tome of Leo.~~ If the negative is ~~so patently true~~ ^{is so patently true} i.e. that "we" (meaning members of the Council) do not all with one accord teach men etc, is so patently true, then the positive is falsified and the Chalcedonian formula does not

But by thus formally testing the propositional form of the Chalcedonian formula, we do not do justice to its content. For as we have said, it is not to be taken as a simple statement of fact. It has all the elements of linguistic statements - (a) it is based on experience - the experience of Jesus Christ in the church; (b) it is partly ^{based on logical necessity} ~~a priori~~ in so far as the church recognized Jesus to be God and had to reconcile this with the fact that He was also man; (c) it is a practical statement in so far as it uses language which goes beyond the merely descriptive; (d) it is moral in the sense that it implies that all Christians ought to believe what it says; and (e) it is historical in so far as it is a statement about the identity of a person who lived four centuries before their time.

But none of the methods used to analyse these five categories of language are adequate for the analysis of the Chalcedonian formula. This is so because the logical language uses all the five categories, but always goes beyond them to make affirmations about ~~the~~ a reality that transcends our time-space world and its logic.

The danger, however, is that we may try to treat the formula as a statement which falls exclusively within one or ~~all~~ ^{more} of the above five categories and seek to ~~analyse~~ ^{understand} it that

Guard the formula as a vehicle within which a transcendent insight is preserved and borne witness to, it may be of some use to us. Christological formula should not therefore be regarded as a description of the nature of Christ, but rather as a testimony to the mystery of Christ ^{identity} ~~which~~ cannot be described either in classical or modern metaphysical terms, and as a warning against certain erroneous ways of bearing witness to the identity of Jesus Christ.

It is a formula within the tradition of the Church, and cannot be understood in isolation from the rest of that tradition. It is a landmark, by analysing which alone we cannot find the way, but the ^{proper} understanding of which is essential for us to find our way forward.

The coming together of the divine and the human in Christ belongs to an order of reality that cannot be dealt with by logical categories. Neither the one-united-nature formula by which my tradition bears witness to Christ nor the ~~the~~ in-two-natures formula by which the Latin and Byzantine traditions bear witness to Christ can explain the mystery of the Incarnation.

The chief warning here is that we should resist the temptation to assimilate ^{such} ~~such~~ ^{into} simplistic.

Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONSENSUS REACHED IN VIENNA

No attempt to clear a Church dispute that has lasted for 1500 years can hope to come to a conclusion in just two unofficial consultations lasting only a few days. What the two Vienna Consultations, the first from September 7—12, 1971, and the second from September 3—9, 1973 have accomplished can be seen more as an opening up of the issues than as a settlement of the dispute. And for this timely opening up we are all very much indebted to the initiative of PRO ORIENTE, and are especially grateful to the Archbishop of Vienna, His Eminence Cardinal Koenig and also to the memory of the dear departed Mgr. Otto Mauer. The purpose of this paper is to delineate the area of agreement, so that future discussion can focus more accurately on the issues not yet clarified.

The late Mgr. Otto Mauer, in his report given at the "Second Vienna Consultation" on the results of the "First Vienna Consultation"¹ spoke about our common starting points in the Tradition of the Church, which was a shared tradition for many centuries, and which remains still a common foundation. We share the Niceno-Constantinopolitan symbol, which is the common liturgical expression of our faith. The three great ecumenical councils of the fourth and fifth century are also commonly acknowledged by us.

Behind all these of course stands our common faith in the Apostolic kerygma, our common fathers and doctors in the Church, our common commitment to the Trinitarian-Incarnational mystery of Christ, as witnessed to in the scriptures. Both sides agreed that the mystery of Christ cannot be adequately grasped in words and concepts, and that theological reflection and discussion can only help to clarify and illuminate a faith that is already there, rather than to generate a faith where none exists. Discussion can dispel misunderstandings. And often, where we had thought that we had disagreed, we may find an underlying layer of common understanding.

Already in the first meeting it became clear that both sides accept the full and perfect manhood of Christ, his full consubstantiality with us. We agreed that Christ incarnate is fully God and fully human. On this, of course, there never had been any real disagreement even in the fifth century. But it is good to reaffirm today, as we did at the first Vienna Consultation (1971), that

"We believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate, perfect in His divinity and perfect in His Humanity. His divinity was not separated from His humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with His divinity without commixture, without confusion, without division, without separation."²

It was extremely significant that at the First Vienna Consultation it was made quite clear that both sides reject both the Eutychian and the Nestorian heresies.³ Once this is clearly seen, the enormous area of Christological agreement between the faith of the Roman Catholic Church and that of the ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches becomes evident. Both sides affirmed the Nicea-Constantinople-Ephesus line. The communiqué of the Second Vienna Consultation affirmed the common Father, St. Cyril of Alexandria, as the basic starting point for Christological understanding. We agreed, both at the First Vienna Consultation and at the second, that there is a possible interpretation of Chalcedon which is in agreement with the faith of the Church, which "affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ despite the phrase 'in two natures.'"⁴

The second Vienna Consultation reaffirmed this basic consensus:

"We all agree that our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father in His Divinity. Himself became consubstantial with us in His Humanity. He perfectly unites in Himself perfect Godhead with perfect Manhood without division, without separation, without change, without commixture."⁵

There is thus no doubt that the area of Christological agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Church is vast and substantially complete. It is this agreement that gives us confidence to go ahead to look at the areas of disagreement in a genuine spirit of love and brotherhood. We do not need any longer to accuse each other of Eutychianism or Nestorianism or even of Monophysitism (understood as affirming *only* one nature) or of Diophysitism (if this means a separation of the united natures).

The major area of disagreement which needs to be explored is that of terminology and its implications. We however, can no longer say that the Fathers of the Ancient Orthodox Church did not understand Greek very well (this was not true) or that they confused *physis* and *hypostasis*. Such comments spring from ignorance of the facts. We know now that those who use the terminology of one nature want to give centrality to the fact of union. What is united is one. We know also that those who speak of two natures do not thereby seek to deny the unity of person or the union of the natures. They are simply afraid that to speak of one nature may mean affirming *only* (*monos*) one of the two natures that were united. We know now that those who speak of One nature do not thereby deny the full and perfect humanity of Christ. We now know also that those who speak of two natures do not thereby mean that the humanity and divinity can exist separately or function one without the other.

Both sides affirm the double consubstantiality and the four adverbs which Chalcedon took from the authentic tradition — and that covers most of the formal Christology. And yet the terminological difference should not be ignored or regarded as inconsequential. We will do well to pay careful attention not only to terminology, but also to the question of how what appears first to be (merely) a terminological difference, has consequences for the ethos of the spirituality and theology which develop on the basis of these different theologies.

One of the things that impressed the present writer in the second Vienna Consultation was Fr. Grillmeier's agreement with the Oriental Orthodox that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol, as a liturgical and baptismal formula had a unique status not shared by the Chalcedonian formula. He agreed that the Niceno-

Constantinopolitan Symbol was not to be altered or added to.⁶ Chalcedon has value only as interpretation of the N-C-S (Niceno-Constantinopolitan-Symbol). The NCS is the test for understanding the C. F. (the Chalcedonian Formula), and if an interpretation of C. F. departs from the basic intent of NCS, then that interpretation is to be rejected. It is a fact acknowledged by both sides that Eutychianism and Nestorianism being post-Niceno-Constantinopolitan phenomena, there is need to face both heresies and to condemn them. The disagreement if any was on the issue whether such condemnation should be in the form of a new formula, which includes the creation of new terminology like "one hypostasis in two natures." The Oriental Orthodox contention has been:

- a) the condemnation can be made without creating a new formula;
- b) the new formula could lead to new misunderstandings and therefore should be avoided;
- c) a new formula is expressly forbidden by Ephesus 431.

If on the other hand it is now acknowledged that the Chalcedonian Formula is not a credal statement, but only a theological affirmation on the basis of NCS, created in order to counter the new heresies of Eutychianism and Nestorianism, then we are all agreed that the Chalcedonian formula as such need not be 'accepted' as 'dogma', but can be regarded as a theological statement directed against two possible heresies which arise in the Church from time to time. I am not sure whether our Orthodox brethren of the Constantinople communion are ready to accept this statement of the difference in status between the NCS and the C. F. I have reason to think that many of their theologians would agree that they are not on the same level, since the liturgical use of the N. C. S. and the C. F. are quite different from each other also in their tradition. This point is of immense importance in the reconciliation of the Churches which have so long been separated from each other. Is it true that Constantinople and Rome defended the C. F. as vehemently as they did, only in the light of Timothy of Alexandria's vehement attacks on it?"⁷

Clearly Timothy was as anti-Eutychian and anti-Nestorian as Chalcedon. Then we have to explain the real motivation behind the vehemence of Rome-Constantinople against Timothy. Timothy affirmed the double consubstantiality without accepting Chalcedon. Double consubstantiality belongs to the authentic tradition, with or without Chalcedon. As Fr. Grillmeier says: "Timothy lays even greater emphasis on this (double) consubstantiality of Christ with man than does Leo I." This is a clear illustration of the Oriental Orthodox position that the double consubstantiality does not need the affirmation of Chalcedon as its base. It belongs to the earlier tradition, integrated into the liturgical corpus of the Church. The Chalcedonian formula and decision add no clarification or new basis to this authentic article of our common faith.

On the question of terminology there are several questions remaining unsettled. Fr. Grillmeier argues that Cyril identified *physis* and *hypostasis*, while Chalcedon and the post-Chalcedonian tradition distinguishes between them, ascribing different meanings to the two terms.⁸ Fr. V. C. Samuel, on the other hand, contends that Cyril did not so identify *physis* and *hypostasis*.⁹ In any case when the Oriental Orthodox affirm '*mia physis, mia hypostasis*' we are not engaging in tautology.

It may not be necessary for our purpose to agree on the question whether Cyril identified or distinguished the two terms. In the post-Chalcedonian discussion, the

two sides agree in distinguishing rather than identifying. If John the Grammarian (later Archbishop of Caesaraea) was right that in common theological usage *physis* refers either to *ousia* or to *hypostasis* according to the context,¹⁰ then it is not useful to point to one or two instances in which Cyril uses *physis* in the sense of *hypostasis*, to show that Cyril *always* identified the two.

The fact of the matter is that Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians are in fairly full agreement about the hypostatic union of the human and divine *physeis* and we do not on either side today confuse *physis* and *hypostasis*. The position admirably stated by the non-Chalcedonian Severus of Antioch, seems to be acceptable also to the Chalcedonian theologians today. Once both of us affirm that the humanity of Christ never had an existence not united to the hypostasis of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, we have come to a basic consensus. We agree on the following points:

- a) The hypostasis of the Incarnate Christ is one — the same as the hypostasis of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity;
- b) There is no separate “human Jesus” with a human hypostasis different from that of the hypostasis of God the Logos;
- c) The *physis* of Christ is both human and divine, with all the properties of the two natures, and therefore Christ Incarnate has double consubstantiality;
- d) The properties of the human and divine natures are not mixed up or confused, nor are they separable or operative separately;
- e) The incarnate *physis* of Christ is composite, composed of divine and human;
- f) We are also agreed that the human and divine natures do not act separately.

When Christ is hungry, it is the Person who is hungry — not the human nature separately. When Christ performs miracles, it is the Person who performs them, not the divine nature independently.

Wherein then does the disagreement lie? It is not enough to say that the difference is purely terminological. The fact that the two natures are hypostatically united, without division or separation, to us ancient Orthodox, makes them one. United means made one. The word ‘*Tewahdo*’ used by our Ethiopian Orthodox brethren is most expressive — “onified” if you want a barbaric neologism. Chalcedonians insist following the ancient tradition of the School of Antioch, that the divine and the human are not commingled (*pace* Gregory of Nyssa) or confused, but remain distinct and different. On the substance of this position the ancient Orthodox agree. But they do not think that this distinction justifies their being called two. Here there is a terminological disagreement on whether the natures which have been united should be called two rather than one after the union.

Does this terminological difference lead to any real consequence for spirituality and theology? If it does not, we can afford to recognize this difference as a fact of history, as a pluralistic pattern of conceiving the same reality, as an *adiaphoron* which can be left to the freedom of the individual theologian or of the particular tradition. Cyril’s *mia physis tou Theou logou sesarkōmenē* and Chalcedon’s *mia hypostasis en duo physesein gnōrizomenē* have different intentions — the first is directed explicitly against Nestorianism and the second explicitly against Eutychianism. The Oriental Orthodox at the Second Vienna Consultation put forward the proposal that Cyril’s *mia physis* formula, qualified by double consubstantiality and the four adverbs would be an adequate safeguard against both Eutychianism and

I was listening to him and while reading some other Roman Catholic theologians who insist on the methodology of “starting with the human Jesus”, I could not quite figure out how they would ever get to the Second Person of the Trinity through their highly phenomenological methodology. The question lingers in my mind whether some of these theologians are really interested in going anywhere beyond their startingpoint — namely the human Jesus. All the pious talk about Jesus’ humanity being transparent to God leaves me with a suspicion of Arianism. I hope that this particular kind of Christology which has recently come into vogue in the European tradition will not triumph within Roman Catholic Theology. Perhaps my friends can reassure me that no such danger exists.

The second question also relates to methodology, but ultimately goes to the heart of the faith. I have great sympathy for those who feel an aversion for static or substantialist ontologies. I too feel that the mystery of Christ cannot be understood in static or substantialist terms. But is the only alternative to a static ontology a ‘functional’ or ‘operational’ account? In our tradition we are used to a dynamic ontology, and all of creation itself can be understood not as a *fait accompli*, but only as something *in via* from arché to telos — from inception to fulfillment. The creation itself is in movement from Alpha to Omega, but we want to insist that the One who is our Redeemer is the same as the Alpha and the Omega. This is a way of confessing in all reverence the great mystery of “Christ in us, the hope of glory”, the one who will manifest himself on that great day in all his glory. To reject the Chalcedonian dispute as a puerile preoccupation with substantialist ontology seems to us a temptation that needs to be resisted. The attempt to solve the Chalcedonian problem in purely operationalist terms does not get us very far. Exclusively operationalist language can be no better than an exclusively substantialist language.

A third hesitation in my own thinking is again raised for the sake of receiving help in understanding. With whom or what are we united in Baptism-Christmation? With Christ Himself in His divine-human nature, or only with the human nature of the Divine Logos? It seems that I have read some Roman Catholic soteriological statements which suggest the latter — that is that union in baptism is with the human nature of Christ, but since it is the human nature that is united to the divine person and nature, it is salvific. I do not like this kind of separation of Christ’s human nature as something with which we can be united, while His divine nature is something with which only *Christ’s* human nature can be united, but not *our* human nature.

I don’t think we have discussed this question among ourselves as Oriental Orthodox. We need to talk about it, because soteriology, as Fr. Florovsky once said very wisely, is the crux of Christology. I hope we can discuss this question here. In that connection I hope we can also affirm here that the ‘nature’ is not the ‘subject’ of the operations of Christ — because this is what we suspect Pope Leo said in his Tome. Can you affirm that it is the Hypostasis of the Logos with his divine-human nature who hungered and thirsted, who performed miracles, who died for us and rose again, and with whom we are united by faith and baptism?

These three questions which have to do with new Christological perspectives may need some discussion here, so that both sides can know and make clear where

stand. The area of agreement between us is too vast, and the achievements of the two Vienna conversations too precious, to be risked for the sake of a pre-occupation with interesting methodological games of some theological professor. Christology is not metaphysics, but rather the salvation of the creation.

¹ See *Wort und Wahrheit*, Dec. 1974, Supplementary Issue No. 2, pp. 16 ff. — ² *Wort und Wahrheit*, Dec. 74, p. 177. — ³ *ibid.* p. 177. — ⁴ *ibid.* p. 175. — ⁵ *ibid.* p. 175. — ⁶ *Wort und Wahrheit II*, pp. 28 f. — ⁷ Grillmeier, *op. cit.* p. 33. — ⁸ *op. cit.* p. 34. — ⁹ *op. cit.* p. 41. — ¹⁰ See V. C. Samuel, *op. cit.* p. 20. — ¹¹ See discussion at Second Vienna Consultation, p. 42 f. — ¹² See Mgr. Mauer's remarks; *op. cit.* p. 43.